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MR. BROWN GOES TO WASHINGTON

And the Era of Big Obama Is Over

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The Work Goes on, the Cause Endures …

When The Scrapbook suggests that the election of Scott Brown to Edward Kennedy's seat in the U.S. Senate appears to have rendered the left unhinged, it isn't telling readers anything they don't know. The evidence is all around us, whether in the pages of our daily newspapers, on the Internet, or glowing from the screens of America's TV sets. Indeed, some of the more marginal inhabitants of the fever swamp (Joe Klein, Keith Olbermann, Jonathan Chait, et al.) seem to have gone entirely around the bend—which, admittedly in their cases, was not too far.

Patrick Kennedy

So The Scrapbook chooses to consider two homely examples from the state of Rhode Island. To be sure, Rhode Island is not very representative of America—it's even smaller than Joe Biden's Delaware—but its historic habit of sending conscientious, conciliatory, even mildly eccentric, representatives to Washington (John Chafee, Claiborne Pell) has fallen on hard times. During the Christmas season, for example, the state's junior senator, Sheldon Whitehouse, an excitable freshman who always votes at his party's call, unleashed a now-historic attack on critics of Obamacare: "They are desperate to break the president!" he exclaimed on the Senate floor. "The birthers, the fanatics, the people running around in right-wing militia and Aryan support groups! It is unbearable to them that President Barack Obama should exist!"

Who would have imagined that one of Senator Whitehouse's Ocean State colleagues could exceed this lunacy? Well, anyone familiar with Representative Patrick J. Kennedy, younger son of the late Massachusetts senator, whose—ahem!—temperamental instability, tendency to mistreat women, and world-class malapropisms have made him the laughingstock of political Washington.

But there was no laughter in Congressman Kennedy's voice last week as he diagnosed the illness that elected Scott Brown: Americans are crazy and violent. Voters are "out for blood," he told reporters, and want a "whipping boy" to relieve their uncontrollable fury. "It's like in the Roman times," he continued. "They'd be trotted out to the Coliseum. They're wanting blood, and you can't blame them!"

As is often the case with Representative Patrick J. Kennedy, it's difficult to distinguish between the "they" who are being trotted out to the Coliseum for sacrifice and the "they" who want blood. But you get the picture. A Republican electoral victory may be explained only by the irrational bloodlust of a fulminating mob. And decent Democrats, like Martha Coakley and Representative Patrick J. Kennedy, get crushed in the maelstrom.

Of course, it's difficult to imagine that a Senate seat held by Representative Patrick J. Kennedy's father was invulnerable to bloodthirsty voters for 47 years. It's even more painful to consider that the Democrats' nationalization of health care seems to have been scuttled by Aryan support groups and right-wing militia. But that's the view from Rhode Island's delegation to Congress—and as Rhode Island goes, so goes *The Nation*. ♦

Obama Rewrites History

In an interview with *Time*'s Joe Klein last week, President Obama endorsed a mythical version of the early days of his own administration:

> I came in expressing a strong spirit of bipartisanship, and what was clear was that even in the midst of crisis, there were those who made decisions based on a quick political calculus rather than on what the country needed. The classic example being me heading over to meet with the House Republican caucus to discuss the stimulus and finding out that [House minority leader John] Boehner had already released a statement saying, We're going to vote against the bill before we've even had a chance to exchange ideas.

We've heard this story before, many times, from Robert Gibbs, the Obama flack. But it's phony, as Obama himself must know.

What really happened is this: Obama spoke to the House Republican conference on the morning of January 27, 2009. The night before, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had already introduced the stimulus bill that she and David Obey drafted with no input from Republicans at all. It was a totally partisan bill. Boehner didn't put out a statement, but what he told Republicans leaked. What he said was that Republicans would oppose this bill, and he said Obama should override it and work with Republicans on a bipartisan stimulus. Republicans weren't opposing an Obama bill. They were opposing a partisan bill drafted by House Democrats (which Obama embraced soon afterwards).

When Obama spoke to the Republican conference he was given a list of Republican ideas for the stimulus. After that meeting, Eric Can-

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tor put out a statement saying this:

> This is the third time we have met with President Obama and we appreciate his openness to Republican solutions. Unfortunately, congressional Democrats have not shown the same willingness for bipartisan compromise—and that is reflected in their bill, which they will force a vote on tomorrow.

Indeed, the House voted the next day—January 28—for a stimulus bill that Republicans had played no part in drafting. All House Republicans voted no.

Obama is right about one thing: There were those who made decisions based on a quick political calculus. But they were in his White House and his party. And they continue to pay a price at the polls for their high-handedness. ♦

A Blow for Democracy

Mainstream media of the liberal persuasion (but we repeat ourselves) have long supported the federal law prohibiting corporations and unions from spending freely to support or oppose candidates for president or Congress. Not surprisingly, more than a few of the (liberal) mainstreamers expressed their deep unhappiness last week when the Supreme Court struck down that law, finding it a violation of the Constitution's free speech guarantee. "The Court's Blow to Democracy" said the headline on the editorial in the *New York Times*, while the *Washington Post* editorialists chose a headline for theirs that accused the Court of nothing less than judicial activism.

Interestingly, the Court discussed *media* corporations and the exemption they have enjoyed from the ban on corporate expenditures. Congress legislated this exemption a few years ago—not incidentally affording media corporations an obvious political speech advantage over nonmedia corporations. But, as the Court pointed out, "there is no precedent supporting laws that attempt to distinguish between corporations which are deemed to be exempt as media corporations and those which are not."

THE CANARY IN THE COAL MINE.

The Court, moreover, said: "With the advent of the Internet and the decline of print and broadcast media . . . the line between the media and others who wish to comment on political and social issues becomes far more blurred." In other words, we Americans—however we define ourselves, traditional journos, bloggers, whatever—are all, or potentially all, commentators.

So there: By rejecting any distinction between media corporations and nonmedia corporations and acknowledging that all corporations may exercise their speech rights in the run-up to an election—aware that the distinction "between the media and others" is also crumbling—the Court has struck a blow for democracy. Just as our headline says. ♦

Department of Perfect Timing

Tired of being hounded by the media? Can't leave home without the paparazzi flashing their cam-

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eras in your face? What better time to head to Haiti.

Last week former senator and presidential candidate John Edwards finally confessed that he is, in fact, the father of a love child, Frances Quinn, daughter of Rielle Hunter, the woman with whom Edwards had an affair. But as ABC News noted: "Edwards was in Haiti [that same day] working on earthquake relief and said only, 'I've said what I have to say for now and I'm here to help people.'"

Edwards's timing was impeccable. Admit to fathering a child out of wedlock while providing assistance to the victims of a terrible earthquake. How could anyone question him about such tawdry matters when he is engaged in humanitarian activities?

The Scrapbook fully expects Gilbert Arenas and Tiger Woods (if he decides to check himself out of sex rehab) will shortly join the former senator in pursuing such noble efforts—at least until things quiet down back home. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

Mr. Obama "could have pointed out, repeatedly, that the continuing troubles of America's economy are the result of a financial crisis that developed under the Bush administration, and was at least in part the result of the Bush administration's refusal to regulate the banks. But he didn't. Maybe he still dreams of bridging the partisan divide; maybe he fears the ire of pundits who consider blaming your predecessor for current problems uncouth—if you're a Democrat. (It's O.K. if you're a Republican.) Whatever the reason, . . . " (Paul Krugman, *New York Times*, January 18). ♦

More Sentences We Didn't Finish

'The most fundamental question—who is the real Obama?—is the one I think has been most clearly answered. The Rush Limbaugh cartoon of Obama-as-socialist notwithstanding, Obama's inclinations toward centrist pragmatism have . . . " (Ruth Marcus, *Washington Post*, January 20). ♦

The Last Word

'You know, it's hard to believe President Obama has now been in office for a year. And you know, it's incredible. He took something that was in terrible, terrible shape, and he brought it back from the brink of disaster: The Republican party" (Jay Leno, January 20). ♦

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By Stuff Possessed

A parcel arrived on our front doorstep the other day, and knowing what was inside, I was greatly pleased, even excited. After surgically cutting away the cardboard and adhesive and slowly unwrapping several layers of packing material, I held in my hands my new watch cabinet. Shiny red rosewood with a glass window on top and brass fittings, it was carried upstairs with especial care to its new home in the master bedroom.

What is a watch cabinet, you ask? It's a cabinet for watches: in this case six inches high, a foot wide, and two layers deep, with ten compartments for wristwatches on each layer. The upper layer is the one with the glass window; you have to pull out a drawer to see the lower floor. I had not planned on acquiring a new cabinet; but the number of watches in my possession has increased in recent years, and my older, smaller cabinet—a black leather affair with room to display seven watches—forced me to store my extra timepieces, one on top of the other, in a separate box.

You can imagine how disturbing such disorder must have been, every evening when I put my watch away and every morning when I picked another one for the day. You can also imagine what it means to give a damn about such things. My alluring wife, who has been privileged to observe these curious rituals over the years, admired my new rosewood watch cabinet (at my prompting) and, after a significant pause, gently inquired: "Do you really need twenty watches?"

Any psychiatrist reading this narrative will instantly recognize some variation of the symptoms of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). In my case it has never been professionally diagnosed, but you need only look around my residence or my office to witness the pathology.

All my life I have been a collector—antiquarian books, Anglo-German colonial stamps, letter openers, autographs, souvenir pencils (sharpened), busts, steel engravings, neckties, English medieval coins, jazz/classical albums/CDs, coin-silver spoons, fountain pens (broad nib)—the list goes on. And like any good collector with OCD, I distinguish, within each collection, its own divisions and subdivisions, carefully catalogued and neatly arranged. My daughter likes to open the drawers of my desk and bureau to show friends the strict order of boxes, the arrangement of Swiss Army knives and male bric-a-brac, folded dress shirts, and ironed handkerchiefs. My son, alas, has inherited some of my collecting tendencies but not (I am relieved to say) the accompanying passion for the full panoply of military-style deployment and display.

CHRIS GASH

On the one hand, it's something of a curse: Any vacuum—space on a wall, gaps in a sequence—must be filled, and disorder or disruption is discomforting. But it's not a particularly severe condition, in my view—I'm not a hoarder, and I practice economy—and in its curious way, it gives satisfaction. No hunter is more gratified than I when a long-sought volume is tracked down, no craftsman more content than I sharpening a pencil.

The watches in the new cabinet are typical in that way. One of my two pocket watches and two of my wristwatches are inherited from my father, who died when I was comparatively young. I didn't know him very well—he was a distant, rather enigmatic, person—and they are a suitable connection. One, indeed, was sent to him by my mother when he was a naval officer in the Pacific during World War II. I am an inveterate acquirer of souvenirs when traveling, and certain watches are the result: A clunky Soviet-made specimen with a graphic of Mount Ararat I bought in Armenia; an elegant gold timepiece depicts Berlin Cathedral. A few feature the seals of institutions of higher learning I've passed through, and two come from presidential libraries (Franklin Roosevelt and Richard Nixon).

Some are slightly absurd—a "left-handed" watch with the winding device on the port side, an Air France watch with an orange plane at the tip of the second hand—and a few are comical. I own a vintage Spiro Agnew watch, which works just fine, and a Bob's Big Boy watch (his arms are the hands) that my wife presented to me as an anniversary present when we lived in Los Angeles. Another, from the Peninsula Fountain & Grill in Palo Alto, features a motto instead of numerals: "Get out and eat/Eat and get out." My sole digital wristwatch commemorates Donald Duck's golden anniversary (1984).

I mention all this, by the way, not to congratulate myself on my splendid collection but to explain, if any explanation is possible, why the arrival of that new rosewood watch cabinet gave me such pleasure. And, of course, why my alluring but long-suffering wife's reaction was a hybrid of amusement and—well, pity.

Philip Terzian

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Mr. Brown Goes to Washington

Life doesn't simply imitate art. There are important differences between the Scott Brown story and Jefferson Smith's. And the differences make Brown's actual achievement more impressive than Smith's fictitious one. For example, Smith (Jimmy Stewart) was appointed to his seat in the Senate. Scott Brown won his in an upset electoral victory. And at the climactic moment in the film, Smith collapses in a faint, but his cause is saved by a fellow senator, Joseph Paine (Claude Rains), who has had sudden pangs of conscience. By contrast, at a key moment in Brown's effort, the televised debate a week before Election Day, it was Brown all alone, relying on his own wits, who seized the moment. He responded to David Gergen's patronizing question as to whether he was willing to "sit in Teddy Kennedy's seat" and block liberal health care policies by saying, coolly and calmly, "Well, with all due respect, it's not the Kennedys' seat, and it's not the Democrats' seat, it's the people's seat."

But there are also similarities between the sagas of Smith and Brown. Both had happy endings, featuring the upset victory of a good (and good-looking!) guy, who sought to represent the public interest and was in touch with public sentiment, over an entrenched, corrupt, and out-of-touch political machine.

And both victories horrified the political establishment. When Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* premiered at Constitution Hall in Washington in October 1939, half the Senate was in attendance. The senators were outraged by the film's depiction of widespread venality and corruption in that august body. Senate Majority Leader Alben Barkley denounced *Mr. Smith* as a "silly and stupid" movie that "showed the Senate as the biggest aggregation of nincompoops on record."

When Scott Brown won last Tuesday night, once again more than half the Senate was surely outraged and/or shell-shocked. And today's majority leader, Harry Reid, followed in Barkley's footsteps by issuing a grudging and graceless statement, which included no congratulations to Scott Brown ("The people of Massachusetts have spoken") and no recognition that the public was sending any sort of message ("While Senator-elect Brown's victory changes the political math in the Senate . . . there is much work to do to address the problems Democrats inherited last year, and we plan to move full speed ahead").

Another similarity between art and life was provided by the Kennedy family. The patriarch, Joseph Kennedy, was ambassador to Great Britain in 1939, and he complained to the head of Columbia Pictures that *Mr. Smith* would harm "America's prestige in Europe." Indeed, he urged that it be withdrawn from European release. Seventy years later, various Kennedys campaigned against Scott Brown's upstart effort to capture the Senate seat held by Joe's youngest son for 47 years.

GARY LOCKE

But the biggest similarity is this: Americans liked an underdog in 1939. They liked one in 2010. When the establishment is arrogant and unresponsive, they tend to side with a Jefferson Smith/Scott Brown figure.

In 1939, that establishment seemed to be made up of conservative economic royalists. Today, that establishment seems to consist of liberal political royalists.

This difference is, politically, a big deal. It is at the heart of the Republicans' opportunity to build on what Scott Brown has accomplished. It suggests the GOP, and the conservative movement, should embrace the kind of enlightened, good-natured, constructive populism that Brown demonstrated in his campaign. And it means resisting the twin perils of Republican establishmentarian royalism on the one hand, and a bitter and destructive populism on the other.

Critics in 1939 were surprisingly lukewarm about *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. But the public liked it, and the film struck a chord around the world. Supposedly, when American-made films were banned in German-occupied France in 1942, some theaters showed *Mr. Smith* as the last movie before the ban, and one theater owner in Paris showed the film for 30 days running after the ban was announced.

Pundits today may not be crazy about Scott Brown's victory. But the public seems to approve. And Brown's momentum will carry Republicans along for at least 30 days. Still, it's a long ten months until November, and Republicans will need more than just momentum and sentiment. They'll need policy proposals that advance the cause of democratic capitalism against crony capitalism, the public interest

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against the special interests, and free markets against big government and, yes, at times against big business. If they can begin to fill out this agenda while standing resolute against the diktats of the liberal establishment, then Scott Brown could be followed to Washington by many more underdog conservative citizen-legislators in November.

—*William Kristol*

After Obamacare

For the past week, liberals have been trying to persuade themselves that Republican Scott Brown's victory in the Massachusetts Senate race need not mean the end of Obamacare. But that is exactly what it means. The Democrats' health care agenda, in anything like the form it has taken for the past year, is now dead. The notion of a wholesale reinvention of American health care, scooping up a sixth of the economy in one fell swoop of technocratic derring-do and paving the way to a government-run system, will be put aside. Even the goal of "universal coverage" will be dropped, at least for now.

It is nothing short of amazing that the Democrats let things get this bad. They have spent a year trying to cram down the throat of the country an incomprehensibly convoluted, misguided, and anachronistic liberal dream, which grew increasingly unattractive (even to its advocates) with every iteration until even Massachusetts voters turned to a Republican for relief. Democrats have managed to make our existing health care arrangements look downright brilliant by comparison. They have wasted the first year of the Obama administration, and a filibuster-proof Senate majority they will likely not see again for decades. And they have achieved nothing: not on health care, and not on the rest of their agenda.

The Democrats' response to Brown's election so far has revealed deep differences among them—with some intent on pushing Obamacare all the more forcefully while others beg for a change of subject before they too are steamrolled by a disapproving electorate tired of being soothed with lullabies about historic moments.

It is impolite to stick your nose into a dysfunctional family brawl, and conservatives need not step into this breach just now. The Democrats are paying the price for a profound miscalculation, and there is nothing wrong with taking some time to enjoy the show. The public has declared that the left's approach to health care is worse than doing nothing, so why not do nothing on health care for a while and turn to other important concerns. Republicans are under no obligation to toss Democrats a life line.

But after a while, the time will come again to think about health care. The problems with our system, after all, are real. It is only the Democrats' solutions that were fantasies. Sooner or later, the debate will start again, and a chastened but still ambitious Democratic majority will try another approach. When that happens, Republicans would be wise to be clear about their own priorities and proposals, and to learn their own lessons from the debacle that is now completing its final chapter.

One crucial lesson is that large solutions are not wise solutions—politically or practically. In a huge and varied country of over 300 million people, replacing the entire system with another is not what the public wants. Instead, conservatives should offer discrete solutions that would bring about change gradually, while also setting some longer-term aims and goals.

In the near-term, Republicans should advance three basic concepts. First, they should seek to address the problem of insuring Americans with preexisting conditions through state-based high-risk pools, not cumbersome insurance regulations that try to outlaw basic economics. Risk pools, backed with federal money but nowhere near the scale of Obamacare's costs, would give those with preexisting conditions more options in the individual market and make a significant dent in the number of uninsured, but without overturning our health care system.

Second, they should propose to help doctors and patients limit some of the burden of rising costs with medical malpractice reform. Sensible caps on punitive damages would not only save money but also help address shortages of medical providers in key specialties, and allow more Americans to afford and access care.

Third, they should argue that the states be given the lead role in developing more detailed reforms of how and where people get their insurance—to cover more people and slow the rise of costs. The overall goal should be to build well-functioning marketplaces in which insurers and providers compete to deliver the best value to cost-conscious consumers. The federal government should remove bureaucratic obstacles to state experimentation on this front, and offer support where possible, but not design one mammoth new program. The regulation of both the practice of medicine and of insurance is done in the states, and their improvement should be too.

Massachusetts is not the only state that has experimented with health care reform. Utah, for instance, has launched a program whereby small-business employees get their insurance through a state-facilitated marketplace for private coverage. Employers make a fixed premium payment on behalf of their workers, and the workers pick from a number of competing options—adding money if they want a more expensive plan, and pocketing the dif-

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ference if they choose a less expensive one. In Indiana, Republican governor Mitch Daniels has launched a program that provides health savings accounts to the state's Medicaid recipients and government employees, allowing them to exercise choice and so bring down costs while extending coverage to more people than ever. Other states will try other approaches to lowering costs, improving competition, and insuring more people—each in its own way and in its own time.

These three straightforward approaches would address a great deal of the anxiety Americans feel about health care without creating new anxiety through a massive federal redesign that increases costs and takes away options.

Meanwhile, for the longer term, conservatives should make a case for changes in the tax law that level the playing field between employer-provided and individually purchased health insurance, with a gradual transformation of the tax exclusion for employer-based coverage into a credit available to all. A consumer-controlled tax credit would also enhance the benefits of risk-pools, tort reform, and state-based reform efforts.

And they should press the case for real Medicare reform, not to use the program as a pot of cash, as the Democrats tried to do over the past year, but to put it on a sound footing by empowering enrollees rather than bureaucrats to make decisions. The Democrats wanted to use Medicare's regulatory power to change how medicine is practiced. But new ideas for delivering better care at less cost will come from those providing the services, not Washington bureaucrats. Doctors and hospitals need to be given the freedom to repackage what they offer so that it is less costly and more attractive to Medicare patients.

These ideas would not yield a sudden transformation of American health care, but a gradual improvement in the areas that matter most—cost-control, greater access for the uninsured, and greater fairness for those with preexisting conditions—while sustaining the quality and innovation that characterize American health care. Constructive policy reform consists not of inventing imaginary worlds, but of building on the best of what we have, offering specific concrete solutions to particular problems, and leaving some room for experimentation to see what works and what does not.

Whether in negotiations with a newly humbled Democratic majority, or as alternatives offered to voters in this year's elections, ideas like these would help mark out a constructive conservative health care agenda, and distinguish Republicans from an administration and a Democratic majority that have favored a political power grab over sensible progress.

—James C. Capretta & Yuval Levin

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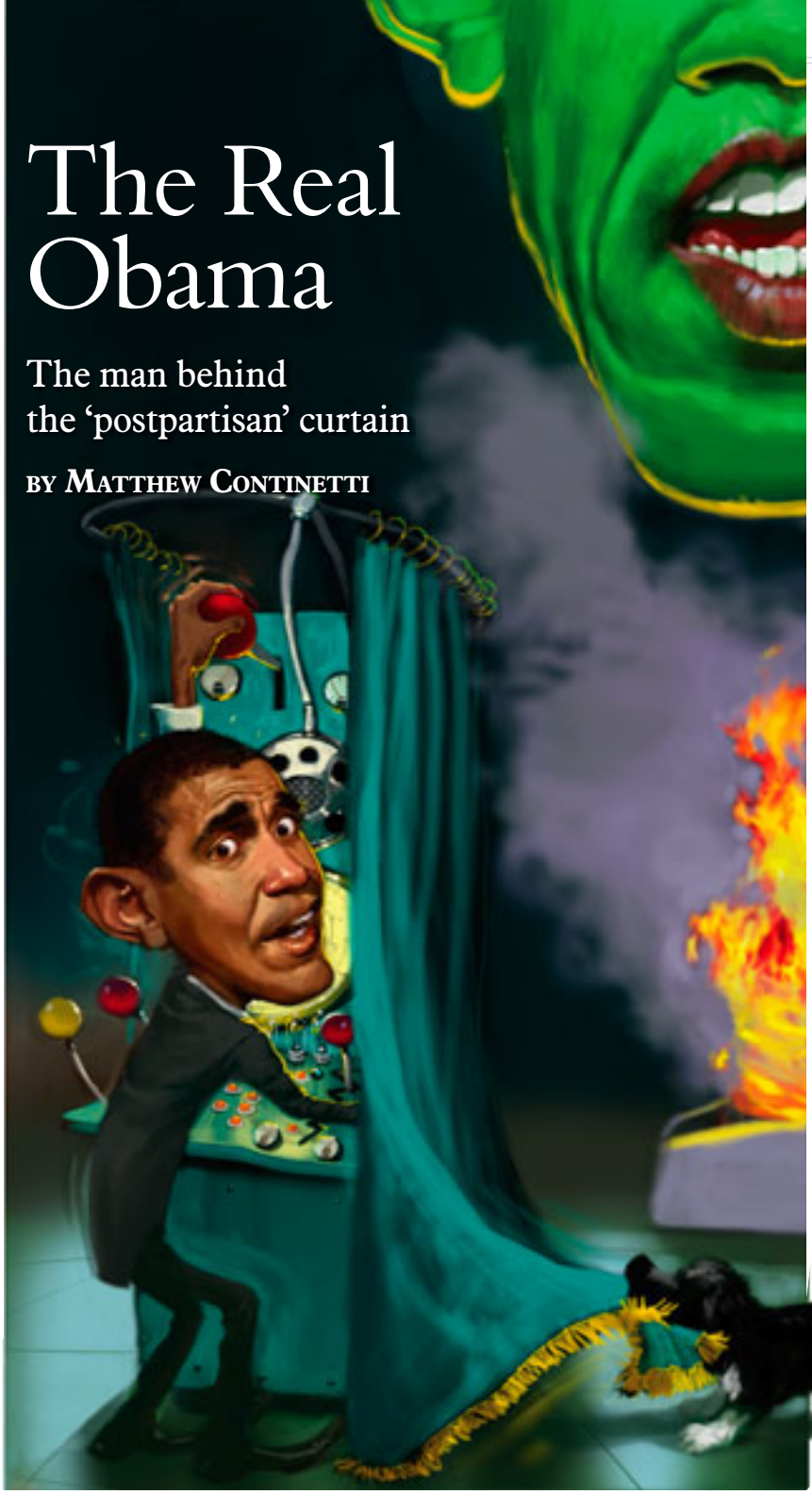
The Real Obama

The man behind the 'postpartisan' curtain

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI



THOMAS FLUHARTY

What does the Massachusetts special election tell us about President Obama? Nothing good. Scott Brown's victory over Martha Coakley not only ended the Democrats' filibuster-proof Senate majority. It also exposed as false the White House's preferred storyline about the president's ideology, capacities, and temperament—what you might call the Obama Myth.

Matthew Continetti is associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD *and the author, most recently, of* The Persecution of Sarah Palin *(Sentinel Books).*

The Obama Myth rests on three assumptions: (a) Obama is a non-ideological pragmatist; (b) Obama is an uncommonly powerful communicator; and (c) Obama has a gut connection with the people. All three are wrong. Only the Democrats' fantasy that opposition to their agenda is limited to a lunatic fringe has blinded them from seeing the president's liabilities. Let's open their eyes.

THE FALSE PRAGMATIST

Obama campaigned on a bipartisan platform of post-ideological problem-solving. The label has stuck: Joe Biden has referred to Obama as a "clear-eyed pragmatist"; David Brooks says the president suffers from a "voracious pragmatism."

All of which might be true—if by "pragmatist" they mean a committed liberal who is willing to sign legislation passed by razor-thin, partisan margins. The stimulus became law with only three Republican votes—and one of those Republicans is now a Democrat. The House passed cap and trade with the support of only eight Republicans; the legislation is dead in the Senate. Health care got a single Republican vote.

Besides some aspects of education reform and the surge in Afghanistan, it is difficult to name a single conservative idea the president has co-opted. You sometimes get the impression that Obama truly believes in the strawmen he parades before the public: those wraith-like Republicans who want to "do nothing" when it comes to health care, the financial system, and the budget. Is he unaware that conservative think tanks and journals regularly propose reforms in these and other areas?

No, Obama's problem is with the *content* of conservative proposals—for they tend to rely on decentralized markets and give economic growth priority over equity. Obama hasn't dismissed conservatives because they lack ideas. He's dismissed them

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because conservative ideas do not meet his ideological commitments.

THE NOT-SO-GREAT COMMUNICATOR

"Obama is the Democrats' Great Communicator, our Ronald Reagan," the editor of *Salon* wrote in February 2009. A year later, that no longer seems to be the case (if it ever was). Again and again, the president has tried to persuade or cajole audiences to follow his lead. No such luck.

Forget about persuading Republicans—Obama doesn't try, and most of them aren't interested anyway. What about independents? Ask Creigh Deeds, Jon Corzine, and Martha Coakley. These three share at least two things: The president campaigned for all of them, and they all lost. Independents abandoned them in droves.

Democrats would like to pretend that Obama has not been a factor in the three statewide elections since he assumed office. And, granted, there were other issues in play. None of the candidates was particularly strong. Unemployment is at 10 percent. Nevertheless, "our Ronald Reagan" told Democrats and independents in all three states that his agenda would be imperiled if Republicans won. And in all three, those voters greeted his dulcet tones with a collective shrug.

Persuasive? In 2009 the president gave dozens of televised townhall meetings, speeches, and press conferences to muster support for the Democratic health care reform. Yet none of this frenetic activity did anything to improve the public's opinion of his approach to health care. Quite the reverse: Opposition to the plan has increased.

The "international community" was also supposed to fall under Obama's spell. Maybe that's true, in some places. Not in Copenhagen. The president went there twice, to campaign for the 2016 Olympic games to come to Chicago and for a global treaty on climate change. He was denied both times. And don't forget the deafness of Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran to Obama's words, as well.

THE LECTURER IN CHIEF

In endorsing Obama for president, the *Washington Post* editorialized that he is "a man of supple intelligence, with a nuanced grasp of complex issues" whose "temperament is unlike anything we've seen on the national stage in many years." True enough: Obama is cool, unflappable, intellectual. And yet the personality traits that made him attractive to so many as a candidate have not worn well as president.

Persuasive? In 2009 the president gave dozens of televised townhall meetings, speeches, and press conferences to muster support for the Democratic health care reform. Yet none of this frenetic activity did anything to improve the public's view of his plan.

Since 2008, there have been three moments when the man-of-the-people looked more like the lecturer-from-Hyde Park. The first was during the campaign, when Obama famously told fundraisers in San Francisco that the folks in "small towns in Pennsylvania" can "get bitter" and "cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations." The speech was pure liberal condescension.

Then there was Obama's July 2009 remark that the Cambridge police had behaved "stupidly" when they arrested Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates on the porch of his own home. The public reaction to his comment, which tripped over race, class, and educational lines, forced the president to call his hastily arranged "beer summit" at the White House, with Gates, Officer Joe Crowley, and Biden as props. Ironically, it was probably Obama's most successful summit.

More recently, when Obama appeared alongside Martha Coakley at a last-minute rally in Boston, the president ridiculed Scott Brown's pickup truck: "Forget the truck," he said at one point. "Everybody can buy a truck." This isn't the case, of course, as Brown pointed out the next day. In the Massachusetts campaign, Brown's truck became a metaphor for his scrappy, can-do, underdog attitude. Obama mocked it and therefore became the voice of entrenched power.

Obama has fallen into a trap that ensnares many intelligent people. He is so convinced of his opinions that he dismisses all contrary thinking as bizarre, dishonest, or fake. In the liberal worldview, Brown is a phony, opposition to health care reform is based on lies or callousness, the Tea Party activists are nuts, racists, or worse, and the solution to most public policy issues can be found only in more regulation, more bureaucrats, and more centralized power.

In the liberal worldview, Scott Brown's victory is not a signal that Democrats have overreached. It is that the American people are "angry" and "don't understand" all the good liberals are trying to do for them. "The same thing that swept Scott Brown into office swept me into office," Obama told George Stephanopoulos last week, as if the American people are a bunch of emotional basket cases who have no grasp of public policy and no ability to distinguish between Bush Republicans and Obama Democrats.

And there you have another incorrect assumption that is key to the Obama Myth. Question is, will Obama and the Democrats learn their lesson? Or will the people be forced to give them another in November? ♦

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Damned If They Do . . .

Congressional Democrats freak out.

BY NOEMIE EMERY

In the wake of the stunning debacle (in their view) in the Bay State last Tuesday, Democrats find themselves with two thrilling alternatives: They can drop their unread and unreadable 2,200-page monstrosity of a health care reform bill and be labeled as wimps, jerks, and hapless losers who wasted a year and couldn't deliver. Or, they can try to ram the Senate bill through the House (which hates most of it) in order to pass a bill that two-thirds of the country now loathes with a passion. They can either jump off the ship or stay on and sink with it. Either way, they end up in the drink.

There's an interesting split among Democrats as to which courses to take. Those edging their way toward the lifeboats are those members of the House and Senate who sooner or later have to be in touch with the voters. Those who want the bill passed (i.e., pushed down the throats of the howling public) are White House officials and pundits, bloggers, academicians, talk show hosts, and others who don't face reelection in this year or any, and will even find their business improving if the bill passes and all hell breaks loose. The pundits, who have no skin in this game since they will not get fired, have transferred their soaring contempt for the American people to their beleaguered House members. "Jump! Jump!" they cry to the quivering congressfolk. No sacrifice is too great for others to make for their dreams.

"Democrats . . . have a congenital tendency to panic," said Jonathan Chait of the *New Republic*, as if panic alone could explain a refusal to ram the Senate bill down the throats of House members, thus thwarting the clearly express will of most voters. "It's Democrats freaking out," said the *Washington Post*'s Ezra Klein, who later advised: "Ignore Massachusetts. . . . It's a bit odd to argue that any special election could be a referendum on a bill that voters don't understand." (Not so odd when health care reform was *the* issue, Brown campaigned specifically on a pledge to reverse it, and 48 percent of his voters named it as their dominant cause.)

"Who elected Massachusetts to decide for the rest the country whether we move forward on the bill?" asked *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter. Actually, it's the country itself that has done the deciding. It's not Massachusetts alone: It's Virginia and it's New Jersey—big, diverse, and very different states that not long ago went big for Obama and had swings away from his agenda in the 20-30 point range. It's the legions of independents who are fleeing Obama. It's the two-thirds of the public that opposes the measure. It's they who are deciding, not people at *Newsweek*.

Another key theme of the pass-the-bill pundits is that it's the debate, not the bill, that's unpopular, so the debate should be stopped by passing the bill in a hurry—so that the *real* debate can begin. This of course tends to reverse the usual process where a bill is debated before it is voted on, and passed only when it has achieved a consensus, but why fret these small matters? Pass the bill first, and argue it later, as the Red Queen might have said.

"The problem isn't that health care reform itself is unpopular. It is that people are turned off by the current debate," wrote Jacob Hacker and Daniel Hopkins in an op-ed in the *Washington Post*. "The Democrats should pass the health care bill now. . . . They can fix it later," says the *New York Times*'s Gail Collins. But it was E.J. Dionne on *Meet the Press* on January 3, who expressed it most cogently.

> The whole plan got discredited in the minds of some people because the legislative process looks really awful. And the more the focus was on the legislative process, the more people said "What's going on here?" Once they pass a plan, you can actually talk about a plan.

Of course, if you talk about the plan then, it's too late to defeat or amend it. But that seems to be the idea.

The pass-the-bill pundits focused in like a laser beam on the negative effects of having spent a whole year for nothing. Missing, however, was any calculation of the ills to be felt from doubling down in the face of a fierce public headwind on a plan that so many detest. They see Scott Brown's win solely in the context of breaking the Senate supermajority, of being a technical glitch that requires a slight recalibration, not as the eruption of a national grassroots rebellion that has been brewing for months. There were the tea parties. There were the town halls. There was the slide in the polls, beginning in the summer and proceeding steadily downward. There was Virginia, which Obama won by 7 points, and Creigh Deeds lost by 18. There was New Jersey, which Obama won by 15 points, and Jon Corzine lost by 5. Then there was Massachusetts, which Obama won by 26 points and Brown won by 5, on an explicit prom-

GARY LOCKE

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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ise to start over on health care reform.

The fourth try appears to have gotten the attention of some politicians. But not of the pundits or bloggers. They believe Democrats have taken all the hits they can from having voted for the bills in the first place, and have nothing more to lose. But Virginia, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and polls all show that resistance has spread to independents and to soft Democrats, and if the bill were rammed through by technicalities or dubious methods, their anger would further explode. The irony is that the pundits urging their party to defy the widely verified will of the people also want to make war on the rules of the Senate: for thwarting the popular will.

How many Democrats from purple or swing states (and since Massachusetts, this seems to be most of them) must now be wishing privately that Obama had lost to McCain? Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, with an assist from the White House, managed to wedge them into a position in which they could have voted against Obamacare and faced knee-capping threats from their putative leaders, or voted for it and faced decapitation by voters ten months down the road.

Since January comes before November, they chose to avoid the knee-capping now in the hope things would change for the better. But November draws nearer, and things have just gotten worse. Administrations have screwed up before, but this, in one of Obama's pet words, is truly "historic" in terms of unforced self-destruction: No party before has wreaked such havoc upon its own members, created such division among its supporters, or sowed so much widespread despair. The fact that one year ago it stood on the pinnacle makes it still more amazing. As Jay Leno put it, "It's hard to believe President Obama's now been in office for a year. And you know, it's incredible. He took something that was in terrible, terrible shape and he brought it back from the brink of disaster: The Republican party."

It took work, but Obama, Reid, and Pelosi were up to the challenge. Heckuva job, people. Heckuva job. ♦

The Brown Effect

Conservatives, tea partiers, moderates, and independents find common ground.

BY FRED BARNES

Scott Brown's victory spoils a popular myth. I'm not referring to the one about Teddy Kennedy as an indomitable force in Massachusetts, even from the grave. Yes, the Kennedy myth was rendered inoperative. But so was the fable about a death struggle pitting tea party populists and angry conservatives against moderates and the Republican hierarchy. That myth foresaw conservatives refusing to support candidates with even the slightest of moderate tendencies, dividing the party, and ruining its chances in the 2010 elections.

In Massachusetts, conservatives preferred victory to purity. Brown is not a social conservative. He's pro-choice and, while supporting traditional marriage, believes "states should be free to make their own laws in this area." Yet conservatives and tea partiers joined moderates and independents in the Brown coalition. They struggled, but it was against Democratic Senate candidate Martha Coakley and President Obama, not against each other.

This was actually one of the smaller manifestations of the Brown Effect. The bigger ones?

My, my, it's a long list: an enormous psychological boost for Republicans of all stripes, a firm belief they can win anywhere, help in recruiting strong candidates and raising money for the midterms, the death of the Obama mystique, a critical 41st Republican vote in the Senate, and a stirring example of how to win.

There hasn't been a Senate triumph as significant since the victory of Democrat Harris Wofford over Republican Richard Thornburgh in the special election in Pennsylvania in 1991 presaged Bill Clinton's win the next year.

But the Clinton ascendency was short-lived. It collapsed in the Republican landslide of 1994. The breakthrough in Massachusetts may foreshadow a Republican revival after the lost elections of 2006 and 2008. Brown's victory "was not just symbolic," insists Republican consultant Frank Luntz. "It's representative of a change in the public's mindset."

But political moods are sometimes ephemeral. So Republicans must be wary. "Republicans—not President Obama or Nancy Pelosi or Harry Reid—will decide their future," Luntz says. The midterm elections in November "will require a genuine break with the past." Luntz's advice includes opposing earmarks, "a laser-like focus on wasteful Washington spending," and "no tolerance for ethical malfeasance whatsoever—no more Mark Foleys."

Pre-Brown, Republicans were more excited than Democrats. The Brown Effect only adds to their enthusiasm to defeat Democrats, Obama, and their agenda, and elect Republicans. This is crucial because zeal creates turnout. Republican turnout sagged in 2006 and 2008, then soared last year in New Jersey and Virginia, which replaced Democratic governors with Republicans.

The Brown Effect has also galvanized independents and made them almost as fervent as Republicans. My friend Walt Day of North Attleboro, Massachusetts, was a campaign volunteer for the first time and assigned to hold a Honk-If-You're-for-Brown sign on a street corner. He loved every minute of it.

Republicans are now three for their last three in stirring independents. In New Jersey and Virginia, independents went 2-to-1 for the Republican candidates. In Massachusetts, Brown had a 3-to-1 advantage among independent voters, according to a Rasmussen poll.

Keeping independents on board is key to winning in November. They are

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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fickle. And Obama is preparing to woo them by emphasizing deficit reduction, one of their chief concerns. His pitch may amount to lip service, but a majority of independents fell for Obama's hollow promises about curbing spending and cutting taxes in 2008.

The Brown Effect has debunked the idea of the persuasiveness of Obama's oratory. He delivered 29 speeches to promote his health care plan last year, all in vain. His campaigning in New Jersey and Virginia didn't help the Democrat, nor did his appearance in Boston aid Coakley. If Obama's magic doesn't work in Massachusetts, it's gone.

And if a Republican can win in Massachusetts, a Republican can win anywhere. That's the new GOP mantra. Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, who's recruiting House candidates, has a different version. "If we can win Barney Frank's district [Brown apparently carried Massachusetts's Fourth Congressional District by 1 point], we can win anywhere," he says.

McCarthy believes 2010 will be a wave election. He's returning to potential candidates who declined to run earlier, figuring they couldn't win. After Brown's victory, "they now see it as doable." Richard Hanna, who lost narrowly in 2008 to Democrat Michael Arcuri in upstate New York, filed to run again the day after Brown won in Massachusetts.

The happiest man in Washington is Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader. As the 41st Republican, Brown is a pivotal addition. His vote would sustain a filibuster that can kill Obamacare and will affect other issues as well.

The only question about the Brown Effect is whether it has legs. I think it does. His near-flawless campaign is an example for Republican candidates to follow, especially in Democrat-leaning states. He was skillful in encapsulating an anti-Obama message: "Raising taxes, taking over our health care, and giving new rights to terrorists is is the wrong agenda for our country." That's a mantra conservatives, tea party people, moderates, and independents can embrace. The Brown Effect leaves them nothing to fight about and much to fight for. ♦

How the Game Is Played

Political insiders reveal their reptilian character in a new bestseller. BY ANDREW FERGUSON

Before Scott Brown rudely burst in with those big burly biceps of his, the attention of Washington's political professionals had been fixed for ten days on *Game Change*, the new book about the 2008 presidential campaign. Think of it: ten days. In excitable, ADHD Washington, where the Internet provides a new crisis of the century every couple of hours, ten days is a geologic epoch. Why were we so entranced? Grab your copy right now and open it to page 279:

> "F— you! F—, F—, f—, f—, f—, f—, f—, f—, f—!!!"
> McCain let out the stream of sharp epithets, both middle fingers raised and extended, barking in his wife's face. He was angry.

I guess he was! And John McCain will probably have much more to say, along similar lines, when he reads the book. But this brief passage—it's too wispy to earn the word *anecdote*—does offer in concentrated form the book's strengths and peculiarities and shows why we were all fascinated by it. We gaze into it and see ourselves, in the town we love, doing the work we prize.

As a book, of course, *Game Change* isn't any good. The haste with which it was thrown together shows itself on every page. The narrative zigs and zags, subplots are left to dangle, anecdotes lead nowhere. The passage above, minus the dashes, opens a section of chapter 15 and then just sits there, completely unexplained. When did this happen? Where were McCain and his wife? Why was he so angry, what did she do in response, who else was there—all the old-fashioned reporter-type questions are unasked and unanswered; the authors merely drop the lines into the text for our enjoyment and then move on to a brief summary of the state of John McCain's marriage (assuming he still has one).

The writing itself is so careless that readers will sometimes wonder whether their legs are being pulled. Most writers would consider the descriptive phrase "sharp epithets" unnecessary after detonating ten—I counted—f-bombs, one right after the other, in perfect sequence. And I'm sure the authors could have done without that extra pair of exclamation points. Elsewhere they dredge up jargon unheard since the third grade. "The *Times*," the book tells us, "made Bill [Clinton] especially mental." They must mean *spazzed out*.

The authors are highly regarded political reporters—highly regarded, that is, by other political reporters whom the authors likewise hold in high regard (that's how admiration works here)—and they work for two general-interest magazines, *Time* and *New York*, where pleasing prose has recently sunk rather low on the editors' must-have list. So if they load up a single sentence with multiple, ill-fitted clichés, they must think, what the hell: "What cranked up the thermostat on Clinton's umbrage were signs he saw that the Obama campaign was stirring the pot with liberal media outlets." And every once in a while they try out a few new clichés of their own—run 'em up the old flagpole, as it were, to see if they can bring home the bacon over the finish line. When it rains they get

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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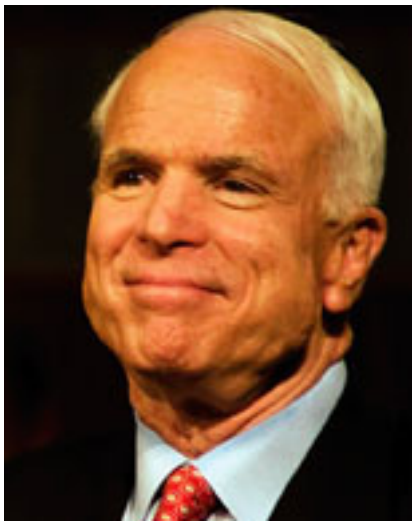
fancy. "Rain bucketed down from the skies all over them." Yuck.

At the end of its ten-day epoch—the Era of *Game Change*, historians will call it—the book had been picked clean of its most titillating anecdotes, so there's no point in detailing them here. By now we all know that Harry Reid felt relieved and unthreatened by Barack Obama's light skin and soothingly non-Negro dialect and that two McCain staffers thought Sarah Palin was a hopeless idiot, with good cause. We've learned that Hillary Clinton believes Obama's mother was probably a Communist, and that David Geffen, the show biz mogul, thinks Bill Clinton's trademark goatish behavior has only intensified in recent years, thanks to the influence of Hollywood goatherd Ron Burkle. John Edwards is a reptile, in case you were wondering, and his wife isn't nearly as nice as she seems when she goes on *The View*. And all of them, every single one of them, use the f-word as if they believed it had the power to transform and to heal. Even Valerie Jarrett.

They don't act this way in public, however, as you've probably noticed; it would certainly liven up those sleepy television debates if they did. But that space between the public and the private provides the theme of *Game Change*, its moral, you might say: Underneath the smooth public surface of a presidential campaign is the steaming landscape of Hell itself, where pollsters scheme, consultants double-cross advisers, advisers undermine consultants, and all of them tattle on their candidates once the cause is lost—and now, say the authors of *Game Change*, the naked truth can be told at last. It's a claim that bookwriting reporters have made for generations now, dating back to Theodore White and his *Making of the President* series. Of course, the landscape White revealed to us looked less like Hell. Whether this is because White was more discreet or the politicians were less hellish, we don't know.

For that matter, we don't know whether *Game Change* really is offering the real story, as the authors claim. We have to take a lot on faith, if only because the authors are taking a lot on faith. They don't want to admit this, of course, and they go to great lengths to affirm the definitiveness of their many, many anecdotes.

Consider, as a tiny example, that quotation from McCain above. How do they know he dropped ten f-bombs and not nine? Maybe it only *seemed* like ten to the snitch who was in the room at the time—and who later counted them out for the authors. But no: It's got to be ten, according to an authors' note describing their methods. "Where dialogue is not in quotes,



Was it ten F-bombs? Or nine? Or none?

it is paraphrased, reflecting only a lack of certainty on the part of our sources about precise wording," they write.

But McCain's words—actually the same word, over and over—appear in quotes. "Where dialogue is within quotation marks," they go on, "it comes from the speaker, someone who was present and heard the remark, contemporaneous notes, or transcripts." We can safely assume in this instance that the precise wording didn't come from the speaker—unless he's out of his f—in' mind—or from notes or transcripts. So it must have come from "someone who was present and heard the remark." Maybe she used one of those hand clickers.

Similar problems arise when the authors root around in the heads of their subjects and jot down the thoughts they find there. At one vulnerable moment in the campaign, they write, "The matter of Bill's approval and his example loomed large in Hillary's mind." It's unlikely—impossible, really—that Hillary Clinton told either of the authors that she craved the approval of her husband. It's impossible, in fact, to imagine Hillary Clinton, a proud woman and infinitely wronged wife, disclosing her desire for her husband's approval to anyone. We can be sure, though, that somebody told the authors this and that the authors believed it.

Who are these people, these sources? They're the kind of people who could take paychecks from Hillary Clinton and then tell reporters their version of her most intimate yearnings. They're the kind of people who could work for Elizabeth Edwards and her husband—one strike against them right there—and then recount for public consumption the following anecdote about a domestic squabble.

> Elizabeth was sobbing, out of control, incoherent. As their aides tried to look away she tore off her blouse, exposing herself. "Look at me!" she wailed at John and then staggered, nearly falling to the ground.

Who are these people, these sources? Why, they're highly paid, well-regarded political professionals, who have risen to the top of their trade.

Whether all the stories in *Game Change* are true or not, we do know that the authors' sources want us to think the stories are true. That's the most revealing datum of all. *Game Change* is much less interesting for what it says than for what it is—a town dump where awful people can unload unflattering and embarrassing stories about their employers, colleagues, friends, and subordinates, knowing that the stories will never be traced back to them and knowing too that the stories will be published willingly by mainchance reporters and read avidly by a public that loves to have it bucketed all over them. *Game Change* is an exquisite construction built from betrayal and deceit. It is a precise rendering of the political culture of Washington. ♦

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Great Scott

The most famous truck driver in Massachusetts.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

"It was fun," Massachusetts senator-elect Scott Brown said of his trip last Thursday to Capitol Hill. "The only time I've been there really," he told me, "was when I was looking for a bathroom as a tourist, and now I'm looking for a new office. So it's kind of surreal but very exciting."

The newest Republican senator said he doesn't have a clue where he's going to stay in D.C. after he's sworn in, but he's already the talk of the town—and the nation—following his stunning victory in the January 19 special election to fill Ted Kennedy's seat. The day after the election, the Drudge Report ran a story on Brown with the headline: "NOW … WILL HE RUN FOR PRESIDENT?"

"The good news, as evidenced by my speech the other night, I have a sense of humor," Brown says of chatter about presidential ambitions. "It's certainly flattering, but I think it's very premature."

Republicans and conservatives might not have known much about Brown beyond the fact that he owned a pickup truck and had promised to drive it to Washington, D.C., to make road kill of Obamacare. That alone was enough to earn him millions of fans, but there's more to the man than the vehicle he drives.

Brown grew up on the wrong side of the tracks in Wakefield, Massachusetts. His parents divorced when he was an infant, and his mother and father each remarried three times. "My mom was on welfare," Brown told me in an earlier interview. His memory of "getting the blocks of cheese from the back of the truck" while he was a child on welfare is one reason he's "fiscally responsible" today.

John McCormack is online editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

"I don't think I would have changed a thing," Brown says of his tough childhood. "Because if I changed one thing it affects everything else. If I wasn't on welfare or wasn't from a broken home,

GARY LOCKE

I never would have learned from my parents' mistakes" and been so devoted to his wife of 23 years, TV news anchor Gail Huff, and two college-aged daughters, Ayla and Arianna. By 3:30 P.M. on Thursday, Brown was jetting from Washington back to Boston to watch Ayla, a basketball player at Boston College, take on the University of Virginia. (BC lost by 2 at the buzzer; Ayla scored 9 points.) When Brown isn't watching his daughter play, he likes to train for triathlons. He finds inspiration in books by Lance Armstrong (and also enjoys books by David Baldacci and Dan Brown).

It's hard to imagine a better biography than Brown's for a Republican candidate in Massachusetts. He joined the Army National Guard ROTC program at Tufts University, where he also played basketball, earning the nickname "Downtown Scotty Brown." Now 50, Brown is a lieutenant colonel in the Guard. To help pay for law school at Boston College in 1982, Brown earned $1,000 by being named "America's Sexiest Man" by *Cosmopolitan* and posing nude in the magazine. "You don't see anything. It's *Cosmo*, not *Playgirl*," Brown says.

As you might imagine, Brown is not exactly a puritan, but he does worship with his family at a Christian Reformed church. "I have to admit I don't go as often as I had" before the campaign, he says. Brown also has close ties to an order of Cistercian Catholic nuns in Wrentham, where he lives. The nuns are "amazing women" who "survive by selling fantastic candy," he says. "I'd certainly appreciate it if you could mention their website [msmabbey.org]." As the *Boston Globe* reported, Brown and his wife helped raise more than $5 million "to replace the order's 50-year-old candy factory with an environmentally friendly plant, complete with solar panels and a wind turbine."

Brown got his start in politics when he was elected assessor and then selectman in Wrentham in the early 1990s. Beginning in 1998, he won three terms in the state house and then three terms in the state senate, where only 4 of his 39 colleagues were Republicans.

That Brown is a perfect fit for Massachusetts doesn't mean that he's bound to disappoint conservatives. True, Massachusetts is one of the bluest states in the country. But during his campaign, Brown sided with conservatives on almost all the major policy issues before the Senate and still managed to appeal to independents.

In his victory speech, he returned to two major themes of his campaign. "The trillion-dollar health care bill that is being forced" on the American people, he said, "will raise taxes. It will

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hurt Medicare. It will destroy jobs and run our nation deeper into debt."

"I believe that our Constitution and laws exist to protect this nation," he said later. "They do not grant rights and privileges to enemies in wartime. And the message we need to send in dealing with terrorists, our tax dollars should pay for weapons to stop them and not lawyers to defend them!"

Brown says he now wishes he hadn't voted in the state senate for a regional greenhouse gas initiative and would oppose a similar national cap and trade proposal. Though he wants to speed up the legal immigration process, he opposes amnesty. He calls *Roe v. Wade* the "law of the land" and says he would have voted to confirm both John Roberts and Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court. He has an A-rating from the National Rifle Association. He supports the surge in Afghanistan and calls for the "quick passage" of sanctions on Iran.

Brown must thank President Obama, Nancy Pelosi, and Harry Reid for pushing a liberal agenda so unpopular that he could win as an independent-minded Republican candidate in Massachusetts. His victory was no fluke explained by low turnout in a special election; 2.25 million people cast votes on Tuesday, slightly more than voted in the 2006 gubernatorial election. True, his Democratic opponent, Martha Coakley, sealed her fate with a string of gaffes in the final week of the race. Polls showed the race neck and neck—just before Coakley said there are no terrorists in Afghanistan and called Red Sox great Curt Schilling a Yankee fan. But the main reason Brown surged to victory is that he is an appealing candidate who ran a smart campaign against the Democratic leadership in Massachusetts and Washington.

Between now and November 2012, when he faces reelection, Brown will have to work hard to maintain his appeal in a state where Democrats outnumber Republicans three-to-one. "In my streak of independence, I've never been beholden to the Republican party," says Brown. "I'm still not."

So far, so good. ♦

The Dead Duck Congress

With nothing to lose, will they go for broke?

BY TOD LINDBERG

Following Scott Brown's Senate victory in Massachusetts, speculation in Washington has quickly turned from the possibility that Democrats will lose the House in November to the impossibility that they won't. It will be interesting to see what happens if congressional Democrats actually internalize the proposition that their majority is doomed.

In 1994, it wasn't until around June that anyone began speculating seriously about the possibility that Newt Gingrich would become speaker of the House. The possibility of an end to four decades of Democratic reign in the House was almost unimaginable, especially to the Democrats in charge. True, speculation began in fall 2005 that the GOP would lose Congress in November 2006. But there was no compelling evidence to support that proposition until much later. The game wasn't really over for the GOP until the Mark Foley scandal, involving sexually explicit instant-messaging with male House pages, broke in September. Before that, Republicans were expecting to lose a lot of seats, but not their majority.

Democrats will certainly try to talk themselves into the view that there is hope for retaining control in 2011. After all, ten months is an eternity in politics. Unfortunately for them, they are going to be deeply divided on where the basis for hope lies. The pay-no-attention-to-the-polls crowd that exhorted the advancement of health care reform even as public opposition grew greater and greater will say "pass a bill, any bill, and move on to jobs, jobs, jobs." Others will say, "bury Obamacare like a plague-infested rat, and move on to jobs, jobs, jobs." These positions are reconcilable only through the slow, agonizing demise of reform. It will linger without hope of improvement, but there will be no death panel with sufficient power to pull the plug. Health care is the wound that keeps on wounding.

There is also the universal assumption among Democrats that when they get to "jobs, jobs, jobs," they will be on safe territory—a policy area about which people really care and where they can deliver. Maybe. But some Democrats will want to cater to the wishes of the party's liberal base in the interest of ratcheting up enthusiasm for the midterm elections, where turnout is king and a listless base a catastrophe. In this scenario, a "jobs bill" will entail more money for core Democratic constituencies: labor, teachers, municipal union members in general. Such an approach will be sharply at odds with the policy preferences of those in the party who think Democrats must move to the center in order to reverse the flight of independents to the GOP.

Some clever sideline cheerleaders will suggest that the answer is clear: Do both. Appeal to the base *and* the center. *Sacrebleu*, it's brilliant! Except for two reasons.

One is that this was more or less the strategy for health care reform: Let the House go first with a liberal bill, and let the Senate tug it to the center, with everyone accepting the final result as the limit of the achievable. That turned out to be a less-than-perfect model. Basic elements of the plan,

Tod Lindberg, a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *is a fellow at the Hoover Institution and editor of* Policy Review.

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especially the "public option," were in, out, deferred, transmogrified, out, and so on until everyone was left with the impression that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid was making the whole thing up as he went along. Which he was.

You have to have a pretty clear grip on what is acceptable to both the very liberal "majority of the majority" in the House and the 60th-*least* liberal member of the Senate before you start. Neither Reid nor House Speaker Nancy Pelosi nor President Obama himself had a clue what the answer to that question was. It's even harder to answer now that Democrats are frustrated and fearful rather than riding high.

Second, although the electorate of January 2009 probably would have been willing to give a center-left health reform bill a chance—provided the emphasis was on "center"—the current public mood is not one in which Obama and the Democratic leadership in Congress enjoy the benefit of the doubt. The center-right nation, having exited stage left in November 2008, has now reemerged stage right. A center-left Democratic strategy would amount to saying to voters, "Okay, let's just say we *didn't* squander your goodwill over the past year." That's not how you win the goodwill back.

The capacity for self-delusion in politics is great. The comeuppance tends to be correspondingly fierce. Most Democrats with experience of elected office seem to understand that if Ted Kennedy's Senate seat in Massachusetts is a losing proposition for the party, not much is safe.

This in turn invites the conclusion among Democrats themselves, soon if not quite yet, that their majority has been tried and found guilty, the execution date set, and that all appeals will be in vain. Following the election of a successor, and sometimes sooner than that when they are ineligible to run again, presidents whose terms are expiring are said to be lame ducks. Call this a "dead duck" Congress.

But is a dead duck lame? Maybe not. As the health care reform effort dragged on and became increasingly unpopular, Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi must have foreseen the possibility of losses in 2010 (including Reid's own seat). But they seemed to think setting a path to universal health care, the missing piece of FDR's New Deal as they saw it, was worth paying a price. Now, the majorities may be gone, the price already paid.

Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose. Is it possible that a rational Democratic response to the current political climate is to forget about trying to rebuild popular support, which is gone for 2010, and do the right thing—or the left thing, in this case? Take the remaining months of your majority and use it to advance the Democratic agenda across all fronts, regardless of political consequences. In the worst-case scenario, at least you would accomplish something consequential on the way to your grave.

It would be difficult to pull off. The biggest tension would be between the Democratic majority as a collective, with a sense of itself as doomed, and individual members who believe that they can survive. If there are too many of the latter from swing districts, the working liberal majority in the House goes "plouffe." The biggest asset, oddly enough, might be moderate Democrats who have taken a look at what's ahead and are deciding to retire. If their moderation was primarily driven not by their convictions but by constituent politics, they can now vote their hearts.

Following the Democratic takeover of the House in 2006, the lame-duck president George W. Bush pulled off a stunning display of political leadership. He ignored the anti-Iraq war election result and the emerging Washington establishment supermajority favoring withdrawal and launched the surge that averted disaster. The duck was not so lame.

It would be no small task for Democrats to organize something similar on the domestic front in the time they have between now and November. Frustration and dissolution are more likely. But the door is open to a last stand and the declaration to Ted Kennedy's ghost that we who are about to die salute you. ♦

'Duh!'

The nation's top intelligence official speaks.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

In congressional testimony on January 20, the nation's top intelligence official, Dennis Blair, acknowledged that the U.S. government mishandled the interrogation of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian terrorist who tried to blow up a plane over Detroit on Christmas Day. Specifically, Blair was not happy that Abdulmutallab was charged as a common criminal and read his rights, rather than being questioned by the elite interrogation unit announced by President Obama as a replacement for the CIA teams used by the Bush administration.

"I'd been a part of the deliberations which established this high-value interrogation unit [HIG]," Blair explained at a hearing of the Senate Homeland Security Committee. "That unit was created exactly for this purpose—to make a decision on whether a certain person who's detained should be treated as a case for federal prosecution or for some of the other means. We did not invoke the HIG in this case. We should have."

The candor is admirable. Blair did not make excuses, but he did offer an explanation.

Frankly, we were thinking more of

Stephen F. Hayes is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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> overseas people and—duh! [here Blair theatrically slaps palm to forehead]—we didn't put it [into effect] then. That's what we will do now. . . . I was not consulted; the decision was made on the scene. It seemed logical to the people there, but it should have been taken using this HIG format at a higher level.

It turns out Blair was just one of several top counterterrorism officials who were not consulted on the very important decision as to how to question Abdulmutallab. Also on the list: Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Michael Leiter, and FBI Director Robert Mueller.

Obama administration officials were not happy with Blair's sudden outbreak of transparency. Within hours of the hearing's end, *Newsweek* reported that "Obama administration officials were flabbergasted" by Blair's testimony, which was "misinformed on multiple levels." How? For one thing, these officials explained, the high-value detainee interrogation group that Blair described "doesn't exist."

That's not reassuring. A year after Obama's executive order, the HIG is not yet up and running, and his top intelligence guy is in the dark?

The intelligence failures that led to the Detroit attack are cause for deep concern. But the stunning incompetence of the Obama administration's response to the attack—laid bare in those hearings last week—is more worrisome.

After 20 minutes in the restroom aboard Northwest Flight 253, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab returned to his seat and set himself afire trying to light the explosives that had been sewn into his underpants. It didn't work, and passengers and crew restrained him.

When the plane landed just before 1 P.M., Abdulmutallab was met by Customs and Border Protection officers. He was taken to University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor where custody was transferred to local FBI agents. By early evening, the al Qaeda operative had been read his Miranda rights. Having been told that he had the right to remain silent, he did just that.

And *there* is the real scandal. In an interview with *60 Minutes* last spring, President Obama discussed the handling of captured terrorists. "Do these folks deserve Miranda rights? Do they deserve to be treated like a shoplifter—down the block? Of course not."

Local FBI agents questioned the terrorist for some two hours before he was mirandized. But sources tell THE WEEKLY STANDARD that the interview was perfunctory, with the kinds of questions one might ask, well, a shoplifter:

Dennis Blair: not consulted

NEWSCOM

Why did you do it? Did you have help? Have you done this before?

The White House claims to have obtained "useable, actionable intelligence" from Abdulmutallab during this brief interrogation. Perhaps. But there are reasons to be skeptical. For one thing, Obama himself three days later declared the attack the work of "an isolated extremist."

Still, various news reports suggest that Abdulmutallab told his questioners that he had trained in Yemen and warned that other attackers were to follow. That's useful, of course. But what else might he know? The White House launched an administration-wide review to examine the intelligence failures that led to the Christmas Day attack, but by mirandizing Abdulmutallab they shut down the most knowledgeable source of information about the attack, its perpetrator—and other possible attacks and perpetrators that Abdulmutallab might have known about.

At the very moment Abdulmutallab was read his rights in Michigan, a dossier on his activities sat undistributed in the computer of a junior analyst at the CIA. (The analyst, the *New York Times* reported, was waiting for a photograph that had not yet reached his desk.) We know that the bomber's father provided detailed information on his son at a meeting with U.S. officials at the embassy in Abuja, Nigeria. We know that some part of the U.S. government had learned of an "Umar Farouk" from intercepted communications between al Qaeda operatives in Yemen and elsewhere. We know that he was trained by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula while in Yemen. We know that he was active in jihadist circles when he lived and studied in London and that among his associates was a former Guantánamo Bay detainee.

He was not asked about any of this, nor was any of this information used as the basis for probing questions about Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which Obama officials themselves have identified as a growing threat to the homeland. THE WEEKLY STANDARD has learned that there was no communication between the National Counterterrorism Center and the FBI "agents on the ground" in Detroit before they interrogated Abdulmutallab and before he shut up.

What might have been learned if the questioning had been done by trained interrogators with all of the intelligence the U.S. government had at their fingertips? They could have grilled him, based on information from intercepts, about specific contacts he had on specific days with known terrorists. They could have demanded answers, based on information obtained from his father, about his radicalization and recruitment. Analysts familiar with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula could have shown him photos of terrorist leaders in Yemen, and asked about the structure of the organization, its safe houses, its

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financial workings, its hierarchy. Then they could have used what Abdulmutallab told them to gather even more intelligence. That's how intelligence work is done.

"You don't give him a lawyer," says Senator Jeff Sessions, ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee and a leading critic of the new law-enforcement-first approach to terrorists. "You don't read him his rights. You grill him. It may take weeks before he decides to really spill the beans."

Intelligence is an iterative process—one interrogation is better than none at all. But 20 interrogations over the course of several weeks, with a subject who thinks it is in his interest to cooperate, will almost always produce more and higher-quality intelligence. The bottom line: We had a load of information on Abdulmutallab—his background, his movements, his contacts—that never came into play in the cursory questioning of him. And we missed a chance to get a load of information from him which could have greatly aided efforts to head off future attacks and destroy al Qaeda assets in Yemen and elsewhere.

The irony in all of this is that the U.S. government did not need to mirandize Abdulmutallab to prosecute him successfully. The information he gave up under questioning would not have been needed to convict him. There was an entire airplane full of witnesses to the attack, the government recovered the explosives, and the terrorist himself, badly burned during the botched bombing, was the smoking gun.

By mirandizing Abdulmutallab, the Obama administration offered him needless protection and shut down a potentially valuable source of intelligence about a growing threat—all in the interest of obtaining evidence that prosecutors will not need.

But the Obama administration hasn't given up hope of obtaining more information from Abdulmutallab. As top White House counterterrorism official John Brennan explained on Fox News Sunday earlier this month, there's always a plea bargain. ♦

See No Evil

The Pentagon's Fort Hood investigation is a pathetic whitewash. BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

Last week, the Pentagon released the results of its investigation into the November 5 Fort Hood shooting (*Protecting the Force: Lessons from Fort Hood*). There is a large, publicly available body of evidence demonstrating that Defense Department personnel missed many warning signs in the years leading up to Major Nidal Malik Hasan's shooting rampage. But by and large, with some small exceptions, the report's authors were not interested in how the many warning signs were missed.

The report begins by saying, in essence, that the system worked:

> Leaders at Fort Hood had anticipated mass casualty events in their emergency response plans and exercises. Base personnel were prepared and trained to take appropriate and decisive action to secure the situation. The prompt and courageous acts of Soldiers, first responders, local law enforcement personnel, DoD civilians, and healthcare providers prevented greater losses.

While we should be thankful that various individuals at Fort Hood acted in a "prompt and courageous" manner thereby preventing "greater losses," it should never have gotten to that point. The Defense Department's system is not working if it is left to first responders to stop a terrorist. A traitor within the military's ranks, with compromised loyalties that had been known about for years—as was the case with Hasan—should be stopped before his finger is on the trigger.

Therein lies the central problem with the Pentagon's report. It says nothing of consequence about Hasan or how to stop individuals like him in the future. Hasan is not even named in the report, but instead referred to as the "alleged perpetrator." The report's authors contend that the sanctity of the criminal investigation into the shooting needs to be upheld. But this is not an excuse for failing to name the attacker. The whole world knows that Major Nidal Malik Hasan did it.

Nor is the ongoing criminal investigation a valid reason for avoiding a serious discussion of Hasan's ideological disposition. The report's authors instead go to lengths to whitewash Hasan's beliefs.

The report lumps all sorts of deviant and problematic behaviors together as if they have the same relevance to the events of November 5. Thus, we find a discussion of alcohol and drug abuse, sexual violence, elder abuse, and the disgusting methods employed by child molesters. We also learn of the deleterious effects of events "such as divorce, loss of a job, or death of a loved one," all of which "may trigger suicide in those who are already vulnerable."

Was Major Nidal Malik Hasan a child molester, a drug addict, or suicidal because of a recent divorce? No. So what does any of this have to do with the attack at Fort Hood? Absolutely nothing.

What is relevant is Hasan's religious and political beliefs. He is a jihadist, although you would never know it by reading the Pentagon's report. Instead in the report's "literature review of risk factors for violence," one comes across this sentence:

> Religious fundamentalism alone is not a risk factor; most fundamentalist groups are not violent, and religious-based violence is not confined to members of fundamentalist groups.

This is a true statement; it is also completely meaningless in respect to

Thomas Joscelyn is a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

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the Fort Hood massacre. The brand of religious fundamentalism practiced by Hasan is *specifically devoted* to violence.

In the days following the November 5 shooting, the details of Major Nidal Malik Hasan's life spilled out in the press. Within hours, witnesses had told reporters that Hasan shouted "Allah Akhbar!" as he opened fire. Hasan's business cards were discovered in his apartment, and various publications carried pictures of them. There was no mention of his military service on the cards, but they did include the acronym "SoA," short for "Soldier of Allah."

On November 10, Dana Priest of the *Washington Post* published a copy of a June 2007 presentation Hasan, a psychiatrist, gave to his colleagues at Walter Reed Medical Center, where he served prior to being transferred to Fort Hood. Hasan was supposed to discuss a topic related to his field, psychiatry. Instead, he defended suicide bombings and argued that Muslim soldiers "should not serve in any capacity that renders them at risk to hurting/killing believers unjustly." Hasan warned that "adverse events" were likely if the Pentagon did not allow Muslim soldiers to become "conscientious objectors" in the war on terror. "We love death more then [sic] you love life!," Hasan said.

His coworkers began to speak up in the press, too, saying they had been concerned that he was an Islamic extremist with compromised loyalties. On November 11, NPR reported that one of Hasan's colleagues had worried that Hasan "might leak secret military information to Islamic extremists" if he was deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Another had "reportedly wondered aloud to colleagues whether Hasan might be capable of committing fratricide, like the Muslim U.S. Army sergeant who, in 2003, killed two fellow soldiers and injured 14 others by setting off grenades at a base in Kuwait."

The quality of Hasan's psychiatric care had also previously come under scrutiny, it was reported. He used his post to proselytize, telling at least one patient that "Islam can save your soul." Hasan's supervisors at Walter Reed reprimanded him for the remark, but nothing more came of it.

Despite all of these warning signs and more, Nidal Malik Hasan was promoted to the rank of major in May 2009. The Defense Department's vast bureaucracy had failed to synthesize the troubling indicators and consequentially never acted on them. All of this information is in the public domain. *Protecting the Force* does not discuss any of it.

There is another key detail, widely known, that is missing from the report. In the months leading up to the events of November 5, Hasan repeatedly emailed a well-known al Qaeda cleric, Anwar al Awlaki. (The cleric is currently one of the world's most hunted men, with counterterrorism forces in Yemen trying to kill or capture him.) Awlaki met Hasan when Hasan's mother died in early 2001, and Awlaki presided over her funeral. We cannot be sure what transpired between the two in the years that followed, but we know that by December 2008, Hasan was emailing Awlaki regularly.

The Pentagon report discusses all sorts of problematic behaviors. Was Major Nidal Malik Hasan a child molester, a drug addict, or suicidal because of a recent divorce? No. So what does any of this have to do with the attack at Fort Hood? Absolutely nothing.

Counterterrorism officials in the FBI knew about at least some of Hasan's emails with Awlaki, but dismissed them as consistent with Hasan's research into the psychological effects of combat on American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. That was a mistake. Awlaki was the spiritual adviser to at least two of the September 11 hijackers, as well as the underwear bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. Awlaki has also inspired untold numbers of recruits to travel to Iraq and Afghanistan to fight American forces. There could be no legitimate reason for Hasan to contact Awlaki.

In recently published interviews, Awlaki has said that Hasan asked "for an edict regarding the [possibility] of a Muslim soldier killing his colleagues who serve with him in the American army." There was nothing benign about Hasan's emails back and forth with Awlaki, as the FBI initially suggested, and the mere fact that the two were communicating should have set off alarm bells.

Did anyone within the military know about Hasan's suspicious contacts with Awlaki? If not, why not? The Pentagon's report does not say. There is no mention of Awlaki or Hasan's emails to him. This omission is especially curious since the report notes that the Defense Department "does not have a comprehensive and coordinated policy for counterintelligence activities in cyberspace." It would seem to have been worth noting that the failures leading up to November 5 involved an especially conspicuous email trail leading to an al Qaeda cleric and that the Defense Department should be made aware of such communications in the future.

There has been much speculation that political correctness played a pronounced role in the events leading up to November 5. The problem is that while many were aware of Hasan's violent ideological worldview no one within the military acted on this information because no one wanted to be labeled a bigot. But Major Nidal Malik Hasan is not your average Muslim and his jihadist ideology should have set him and others like him apart as threats. This may be the biggest problem with the Defense Department's "system" as it exists today—no one wants to state the obvious. In that vein, *Protecting the Force: Lessons from Fort Hood* is symptomatic of the very problem it should be seeking to redress. ♦

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Mission to Haiti

It won't be easy or cheap, but the U.S. military has a crucial long-term role to play

By Thomas Donnelly

As the search-for-survivors phase of Haiti relief operations comes to a close, it is increasingly apparent that the scope of the disaster demands a large and long response. The U.S. military effort alone will soon have 33,000 troops ashore or in direct support of the relief operations. Private donations and international pledges of aid are in the billions. The question now is not about the level of effort, but how it can be organized and sustained.

There is a risk of overlearning the Iraq and Afghanistan lessons, but it ought to be apparent that significant stabilization and reconstruction efforts in weak or collapsed states have four essentials: American leadership in properly defining the mission and its goals; a clear-eyed assessment of the situation that begins with the facts on the ground but includes a grasp of the interests of outside parties; a coherent strategy that sets priorities through a workable command structure; and adequate resources to execute that strategy. While sound methodology is no guarantee of good result; poor methodology ensures failure. And given Haiti's history, there is a strong moral and strategic imperative—not just for the United States, but for all countries—to help get it right this time.

One of the great cruelties of this earthquake is that, in the last several years, Haitians had reasons for hope.

Properly defining the Haiti mission and its goals is the most pressing issue. The humanitarian response has been remarkable and generous, but so far it is also chaotic and disorganized. Transforming the outpouring of emotion into a durable mission will require a very exacting but powerful form of leadership—one only the United States can provide—that focuses on the true interests of the Haitian people. President Obama must account for the sensitivities of many actors and forge a common—but not lowest common denominator—purpose. He is an ideal figure for the task, but he's got a lot of cats to herd.

Thomas Donnelly is director of the Center for Defense Studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

Obama must establish a set of long-term goals that can provide for political stabilization and economic development. His January 15 article in *Newsweek*, "Why Haiti Matters," was a good start. The president began by eloquently expressing American sentiments and commitment, and returned to the theme of American exceptionalism he once scorned but has lately embraced. "America's leadership has been founded . . . on the fact that we do not use our power to subjugate others, we use it to lift them up." But, beyond vowing to work with others, he did not define what "lifting up" Haiti means. The Haiti mission needs purpose before it can move on to process.

Obviously the most immediate purpose is to relieve suffering, but if there is to be an American engagement beyond that—as there should be—giving Haitians an opportunity to decently govern themselves must be the goal. Whether in the form of outside oppression or exploitation by their own elites, Haitians have ever had too little security, political freedom, and opportunity for economic development—the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

This is not a utopian goal. One of the great cruelties of this earthquake is that, in the last several years, Haitians had reasons for hope. The U.N. force in Haiti, known by its French acronym MINUSTAH, had slowly begun to transform the Haitian police—the armed forces still exist constitutionally but were demobilized in the aftermath of the 1994 coup—into an effective and professional force. Domestic security was further boosted by the counterinsurgency-like campaign waged by MINUSTAH to suppress the gangs—which are not only criminal but political organizations in Haiti—that too often rule the country's streets and rural villages.

Haitian president René Préval may not be the most charismatic or able politician, but the very qualities he's now being criticized for—the *Washington Post* wrote that his "aversion to the public stage has left millions of Haitians wondering whether there is a government at all"—have been those that had begun to normalize Haitian politics.

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The *Post*'s complaint, echoed across the American media, betrays a deep myopia. The capacity of the Haitian government was limited even before the earthquake, and Haitians are weary of egomaniacal leaders, having seen their share in Aristide and the Duvaliers. A "technocrat largely free of sharp ideologies"—as the *Post* described Préval—is a step forward in Port-au-Prince.

Economic development is possible, but only if Haiti does not become yet another battleground between international aid professionals and those who argue—rightly—that capitalism is the road to prosperity. The aid groups are already deeply entrenched in Haiti, and they are critical to the immediate relief effort. But longer term, there are alternatives to consider. Elliott Abrams, for instance, outlined an innovative "development through the diaspora" proposal in a January 22 *Washington Post* op-ed.

Achieving longer-term goals in Haiti will only be possible on the basis of a realistic assessment of the current situation. To begin with, there's a long way to go to provide the most basic food, water, sanitation, and health care needs of millions of people. It's not just those formally hurt or homeless, but the larger populace affected by the collapse of the Haitian economy. Not even the U.S. military has been able to get to many parts of the country thus far. There's also been significant internal migration from Port-au-Prince to the countryside, but its effects aren't yet clear.

The security situation in Haiti remains tenuous, but has been calmer than many anticipated in the immediate wake of the disaster. Violence and looting in the week following the earthquake were by most accounts sporadic, though aid distribution centers, according to U.S. soldiers, have been continuously on the verge of chaos. Some of Port-au-Prince's notorious gang leaders have reportedly already renewed their turf wars. Many of those who had been taken off the streets by the MINUSTAH operations of recent years escaped when the city's jail was devastated in the earthquake. The gangs aren't likely to take on U.S. or U.N. forces, but they may think they can wait out the foreigners and prepare for a fight with the Haitian police. The recent loss of much of the leadership and infrastructure of the U.N. mission in the country make this an even greater likelihood.

The political situation in Haiti is also surprisingly calm, despite the whining about Préval. The most immediate problem is Jean-Bertrand Aristide's desire to return to Haiti, which he announced from his home-in-exile, South Africa. Préval doesn't want his former patron back, and neither do Haiti's Caribbean neighbors, which helped engineer the arrangement with South Africa. Sharon Hudson-Dean, spokeswoman for the U.S. embassy in Pretoria, delicately made the same point: "We believe that the former president Aristide can contribute a great deal to encourage the international efforts for stability and reconstruction from South Africa." Not from Haiti. On the other hand, Aristide is wearing out his welcome with the South Africans. Former president Thabo Mbeki felt strongly about Haiti as an outpost of African culture and liked to celebrate Toussaint L'Ouverture's revolution and the defeat of Napoleon's attempt to reclaim the colony. The current president, Jacob Zuma, is said to be less enthusiastic. The South Africans say they'd be pleased to send Aristide back to Haiti if he "would be happy with a job in academia."

Personnel from the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson *assist earthquake victims.*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The rest of the world has stifled its anti-American reflexes for the most part. Complaints about the United States have come mostly from outside kibitzers. Venezuela's Hugo Chávez has hardly bothered. French "cooperation minister" Alain Joyadet, piqued that French aid flights had to wait to get into the Port-au-Prince airport, sniffed that "This is about helping Haiti, not about occupying Haiti," but was promptly and publicly smacked down by President Nicolas Sarkozy effusing about America's "essential role." The Haitians themselves have been almost unanimous: "We're all scared. We need the United Nations and we need the United States Marines," one told the *Washington Post*. A typical sign in front of a crushed office building read: "Welcome the U.S. Marine. We need some help. Dead bodies inside."

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The U.N. is also trying to help out. Following a trip to Haiti last week, Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon called for the deployment of an additional 3,500 police and peacekeeping forces to the country. Brazil said it would provide 800 of these. Canada has also acted to send troops. The Canadians, with whom we have worked very closely in Afghanistan, have much previous experience in Haiti, and the Brazilian government energetically embraced MINUSTAH as an expression of Brazil's growing wealth and power.

In sum, the winds are favorable if the United States can chart a course. But achieving anything like unity of effort—let alone unity of command—won't be easy. The relevant "coalition of the willing"—the United States, France, Canada, Brazil, the Caribbean states, and the U.N. collectively will prove hard to manage. And President Obama cannot easily indulge in a months-long assessment à la Afghanistan. The immediacy of the need and the difficulties of the international politics are too pressing. Obama will, moreover, need to rally American domestic support.

The first priority is to keep the security situation under control. U.S. forces are working with the Préval government and trying to be respectful of Haitian sovereignty. But the danger is in doing too little rather than too much. Unrestrained looting in the aftermath of the defeat of Saddam Hussein was a first step on the road to insurrection and the undermining of the "liberation narrative." For people in dire need, security comes first. It is a good sign that the Marines and the 82nd Airborne are conducting patrols in Haitian streets and villages at night; a little presence goes a long way, particularly in joint patrols with Haitian police.

The rebuilding of Haiti's security forces had barely begun when the earthquake struck. U.S. efforts to build police capabilities in Iraq and Afghanistan have often made a bad situation worse; our experience in Afghanistan strongly suggests that our allies also promise more than they can deliver. As MINUSTAH is rebuilt, the Haitian security forces should be its focus, one that the United States will support. The best sign of a reborn Haiti will be a government able to secure its own people. It will also be a first step toward true political stability and justice.

It would also be good if long-term development plans began with a consideration of security—it's what Haitians say they most want. This is not to diminish the need to relieve the humanitarian crisis or to build a better Haitian infrastructure, or to shortchange the need for economic growth. But, as the last week has made obvious, relief agencies and NGOs are in fact consumers of security before they are producers of it—they need protection to do their work, and desperate people will fight one another for the goods that they have to deliver. This was true in Haiti before the earthquake. Conversely, if security becomes self-sustaining, relief and development efforts will accelerate.

The security priority should be evident when it comes to resource questions. Once again, the U.S. military has distinguished itself by its rapid and large-scale reaction. Once again, the question is whether our current forces can sustain this level of effort and who will take their place when they leave. At 33,000 troops, the current U.S. operation in Haiti is "surge-sized." It now includes three land-force brigades; a full-size Navy aircraft carrier and two Marine carriers, plus a host of support ships; and a significant airlift operation (almost 500 sorties thus far) involving C-130s and C-17 transports—a plane with global range but short-field landing ability. Navy and Marine helicopters are working equally hard. The staff—under the command of a three-star general—required to make such an operation work is large.

Even if this force proves sufficient, sustaining operations will be tough. Pentagon officials insisted this week that Haiti "has not right now delayed anything going to [Afghanistan], but it clearly puts a strain there." Simultaneously, the administration announced the deployment of the second Marine Expeditionary Unit and its associated ships, which were headed for the eastern Mediterranean to be ready in case of a crisis in the Central Command area—a fairly frequent source of "overseas contingency operations" these days. The White House also issued an executive order authorizing the activation of medical teams from the Naval Reserve and up to 900 Coast Guard reservists; 100 newly activated Coast Guard personnel were dispatched to Port-au-Prince harbor shortly thereafter. As the Haiti operation goes on—the Marines have 30 days' supply on their ships, no more—and the need for engineering equipment to remove wreckage and restore public utilities increases, Army reservists and National Guardsmen are likely to have to take up the job. With Haiti added to Iraq and Afghanistan, the distinction between active and reserve forces continues to disappear.

The cost of these efforts will be high, in the billions. Congress was already going to have to consider a higher-than-expected supplemental appropriations bill reflecting the Afghanistan surge and the administration's previous obfuscation about war costs. In the current economic and political climate, this is hardly politically expedient, but it is essential.

The U.S. military has learned at great cost about this type of mission in recent years. And there is a coalition willing and eager for American leadership. The sixteen nations who now count themselves "Friends of Haiti" will meet this week in Montreal. It will be an opportune moment for President Obama to sketch out a plan of campaign. ♦

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Google vs. Beijing

It's hard to do no evil when you work with the Chinese regime

By Ethan Gutmann

Western corporations never die in China, they just fade away. They don't do what Google has threatened to do: Slam the door on its way out. Google's decision to stop censoring its Chinese search engine—announced on the company's blog on January 12 and thus guaranteed to annoy the propriety-obsessed Chinese leadership—may have only minor technical impact on Chinese users. Yet it's a bellwether, revealing the true direction and the inherent fragility of the Chinese Internet.

Of all the post-Tiananmen dreams of Chinese liberation, the Chinese Internet has always been the most enticing. In the early 1990s, a frontal attack on the Communist party's hold on the Chinese state appeared impossible, and dissident attention shifted to a very different strategy opened up by Deng Xiaoping's reaffirmation of the reformist economic agenda during his 1992 Southern Tour. A great wave of entrepreneurial activity, technology, and commercialism, it was hoped, would simply sweep away the rotting system. Thus the so-called "New Economy"—fueled by the infusion of Western capital—and the growth of the Internet at the end of the 1990s seemed an answer to a dissident prayer, offering a sort of technological end run around the party system.

A decade ago, the Chinese Internet was small, but it was also in a state of nature. The party blocked websites, but it was a clumsy, labor-intensive affair and easily circumvented. Dissident messages were considered moderately "safe for work." Rumors, critiques of the party, gossip—often from a nationalist or a labor perspective—would continually flare up on my Chinese coworkers' screens. Internet cafés—the cheap ones, the ones that didn't serve lattes—were packed tight with computers and young Chinese. They sprung up in the Beijing alleyways, the *hutongs*, like crack-houses in an American ghetto, cheek by jowl with the open-air toilets.

Perhaps because of the hopefulness of this fleeting moment when China was simply hustling to get on the scoreboard, Western cyber-utopians have never understood the party's Internet objectives. The party had no interest in total control—in "nailing Jell-O to the wall," as Bill Clinton called it back in 2000. Instead, the party saw the Internet as a way to mobilize Chinese nationalism and prosperity. And they noticed something else, something that was just a gleam in the eye of Google's founders: The Internet is far more revealing of who its users actually are than any mass communication technology that the world had heretofore seen. And that information is readily available.

The Internet meant that a bunch of autocrats who didn't get out much could respond to the Chinese grass roots. They could encourage students to blow off steam by chucking bricks at the U.S. or Japanese embassies. They could judge precisely when the tainted milk powder scandal reached critical mass and it was time to execute a local official or two. With a few prolific trolls, they could push web discussions where they wanted them to go, crushing complaint and clearing the intellectual ground as far as the eye could see. The Chinese leadership could suddenly observe dissent like a bacteria growing in a controlled lab. They could offer it nourishment, creating platforms and spaces to breed, and then pour acid on the entire experiment.

The Communist leadership had learned something from the close call of Tiananmen: Don't put your faith in the big battalions because they can flip-flop. Diversify. Fill Beijing with small military units and enough will stay loyal, and make sure the avenues can sustain the weight of armored vehicles as they rush to the center. So, they decided, let the Internet service providers proliferate. Let the Westerners in. But make sure the main Internet corridors are patrolled by the party.

They called this approach the Golden Shield. In baseball terms, the censorship effected for the party by Yahoo, and eventually Microsoft, was the infield. If you watch people, and they know you are watching, they will censor themselves (in the case of Chinese blogs, you will even observe them displaying a certain belligerent pride in toeing the party line). Golden Shield wasn't aimed at students viewing pornography. It was targeted at what training documents written by Cisco employees called "Falun Gong evil cult and other hostile elements."

The party needed a way to attach the individual surfer's online presence to other communications and, ultimately, to their *danwei*—the work unit holding their employ-

Ethan Gutmann, an adjunct fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, is completing a book on the conflict between the Chinese state and Falun Gong.

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ment and political history file. Cisco proposed that identity searches could employ the one thing that everyone in China would soon have—a cell phone. By tying voice patterns to surfing patterns and then to the *danwei*, and making that file accessible to local police, the courts, and the Public Security Bureau, you could have a paperless legal system—just a couple of clicks separating the man in the street from the labor camp. Thus surveillance, supplied by Cisco and Nortel and, in the early days, Sun Micro, became the outfield—and these companies were the MVPs of Golden Shield.

On occasion, players didn't cooperate. Microsoft resisted handing over its encryption source codes in 2000, even building an industry coalition in Beijing with tacit support from the Commerce Department. It was a brief shining moment but the company quietly relented a few years later. After handing over the emails of Chinese journalist Shi Tao and others (Shi got ten years in prison), Yahoo was sued by human rights groups, earned the contempt of Chinese citizens, and sputtered its way through a congressional hearing. But it was sputtering financially as well and eventually sold most of its China business to the goliath Alibaba.com in late 2005.

Enter Google. With its arrival in China in January 2006, the party appeared to have realized its third goal, after censorship and surveillance: legitimacy. Like most things in China, this involved a degree of doublethink. On the one hand, the Chinese Internet now looked normal—by allowing the term "Googled," the party had given a sop to the Chinese intelligentsia in any conversation with their foreign colleagues. On the other hand, Google agreed to censor their search results so that the words *Tiananmen Square* brought up images of government officials and American tourists taking a languid stroll at sunset, and the words *Falun Gong* only produced obscene, cackling government attack sites. Google insisted on a results disclaimer, but the Chinese audience got the message: Google was happy to play shortstop for the party.

Google justified this transgression of its "don't be evil" corporate philosophy with the usual just-arrived-in-China pabulum: The censorship is probably temporary (give them enough rope, as Marx said), better to engage China than to boycott it, and, anyway, the country is changing. Indeed it is, but it is not heading in the direction that Google hoped.

The first portent was the Beijing Olympics. Under the pretext of "security," practically every expat in China, no matter how long-term, settled, or "indispensable" from a business standpoint was suddenly informed that he had to leave China well before the "One World, One Dream" festivities and stay out for a while. This came at a time when the Chinese were backsliding on government regulations, preferential treatment for Chinese companies, and intellectual property rights. Far from opening to the world, China was closing the door.

The actual slam occurred shortly afterwards: The party dabbled with requiring the installation of "Green Dam" software (having ripped off the code from CyberSitter, a California company) on all PCs. Then Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter were blocked. Why was the party tossing away its hard-won normalcy? In part, because it was facing an unprecedented external challenge from a suburban home in North Carolina.

In the living room sat a couple of Chinese Falun Gong practitioners whose engineering training dated back to the early days of the Chinese web. Because the Chinese Internet was constructed like a company barracks, in orderly blocks, the Falun Gong engineers, by looking at a seemingly meaningless series of numbers, could tell with reasonable certainty if an address was state-connected. With this knowledge and their hacking skills, they could track state security behavior. Eventually they discerned patterns and corners where the dogs gave only a cursory sniff. They built special programs simulating those corners, but with hairline cracks in the firewalls, and then used those cracks to send loads of uncensored news, the "Nine Commentaries" (Falun Gong's ur-condemnation of the party), and instructions for Chinese users to set up their own wormholes.

It was a dynamic process. Bill Xia, the public face of the engineers, remembers waking up one morning to find that the party censors had disabled the system. He corrected it. Ten minutes later, it was down again. And so it went for months, like salvos between the trenches, with activity falling into a lull over the Chinese Spring Festival, then starting up again after the party guys got back to the office. The Falun Gong engineers introduced new weapons: spam attacks on a vast scale, dummy websites that would proliferate automatically, and evolutionary algorithms that could change Internet addresses many times within a single second yet somehow bookmark normally.

These caused havoc for the party censors—entire Chi-

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nese government news sites were blocked by accident, days where the entire Chinese Internet slowed to a crawl with incalculable losses to Chinese ecommerce. The engineers soon gathered diverse reinforcements: Ultrareach, Freenet, and the other dissident systems that today make up the Global Internet Freedom Consortium (GIF). The consortium became a lifeline for the underground network of Chinese activists and a conduit for uncensored information, metastasizing from the Chinese Internet into printouts and pamphlets dropped off on doorsteps across the villages of China—usually in the dead of night.

On a "Quit the CCP" website, millions of Chinese citizens clicked a button that renounced their party membership. Most of those who clicked probably weren't party members, yet for all the Falun Gong hype and (understandable) wishful thinking, the significance is real. These were promissory gestures of rejection from Chinese citizens of all backgrounds and beliefs. GIF now allows well over half-a-million Chinese citizens a day to surf freely. (And it is not just boring old malcontent Chinese using GIF, but also young Iranians. GIF is responsible for a large share of the uncensored communication coming out of Iran since the aborted green revolution.)

Yet we have to measure these achievements against the impressive successes on the party side. The Chinese Internet has seen spectacular growth. It looks real. Blogging flourishes. News circulates, some of it from party-sympathetic Western reporters and Phoenix TV. In most countries, the revelation of shoddily constructed schoolhouses in an earthquake zone would have brought the government down. In China, reporters were so gratified to be given a free hand to report on dramatic rescues in Sichuan for two weeks that when they were told to clear out and ignore the wailing parents, they actually obeyed and dropped the story. Internet discussion boards appear free and unfettered (though the inevitable patriot comments are reputedly paid at .50 cents an entry). But that's the point. This is the real "new economy," where the party has turned censorship and surveillance into a viable economic model.

So why would Google leave? It isn't hemorrhaging money; sources might differ about Google's market share (likely between 15 and 30 percent), but there is no question that it has made inroads against Baidu.com, the Chinese search engine. In any case, the former head of Yahoo China told me that Yahoo always played down its actual numbers to avoid the Chinese government's wrath.

When Google announced its decision to stop censoring its Chinese search engine, it cited unauthorized access to the gmail accounts of 20 Chinese human rights activists. Yet the hacker angle looks more like a defense against a Yahoo-style lawsuit than a reason to leave. Given Hillary Clinton's recent remarks on global Internet freedom, the administration may be angling for an arms control-style agreement with the Chinese leadership on global cyber security. But, quite frankly, if you do business in China, hacking is to be expected. My assumption is that every keystroke I (or any other human rights advocate) types eventually makes its way back to the Public Security Bureau. Google's internal shakeups suggest the possibility of an inside job—hardly surprising when party members saturate your hiring base. And that sort of perfidy does tend to drive expat managers bananas. But the hacking accusations were just as likely a way to enlist the protective wing of the State Department.

Which leaves: Don't be evil. The party has been fighting GIF for some time, but was only partially confident that it could stop the penetration. Ergo the closing of the social networking sites where uncensored news could go viral. But it was never about preventing people from looking at CNN or preventing the occasional Hu Jintao crack or cartoon, as President Obama seemed to interpret a question on web freedom during his recent trip to China. There are far greater skeletons to hide: live organ harvesting of political and religious prisoners, for example. My research indicates that the practice is far more widespread than previously understood, extending beyond Falun Gong to Christians, Uighurs, and even Tibetan prisoners of conscience. When Google made its decision to leave China, it was making a decision to leave something behind. I don't mean a bad business environment, but an evil one.

Will Google's decision matter? Baidu users will continue to click on prefab options. Google.cn users, who tend to do more elaborate searches for a more targeted result will mostly find another way. But the majority of Chinese users will continue to avoid the sites that they know are truly dangerous to the regime. Remember, censorship is only the first line of defense. Which is why, from a technical standpoint, Google leaving China is newsworthy, emotional, and ultimately meaningless, a bit like the death of Princess Diana. By any sort of rational calculus, Diana's departure didn't really matter, except that the legitimacy of the English royalty has never really recovered from the death of the "People's Princess."

We may never know the full story of Google's departure, but we do know that China is not Iran, where the regime does not even bother with the illusion of a free Internet. In China, the entire country craves tokens of normalcy so deeply that people will nurture a delusion. Given the flowers spontaneously strewn across the Google headquarters sign in Beijing by ordinary Chinese, the party may have just lost the People's Browser. ♦

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The Roman Catholic church of St. Antonios in Kontea

Bare Ruined Choirs

Turkey's war on the cultural heritage of Cyprus

BY KATHERINE EASTLAND

When churches fall completely out of use
What shall we turn them into?
—Philip Larkin, *'Church Going'*

Nicosia

Soon after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, the roof of St. Andronikos church in Kythrea caved in and fell into its sanctuary. No one came by to clear the rubble, so there's a heap of ruins on the ground covered with tangled greenery. From where I stand, on top of that heap, I can see that the walls, once known for their frescoes, have been stripped white and are now marked with black and neon graffiti. In some places there remain a few painted figures, including ones of Saints Peter and Paul, but their faces are chiseled out and their bodies have been pockmarked by bullets. Cars roll by every so often, but the one persistent sound is the hum of bees coming from a smashed clerestory window.

I came across this church off a road near the Agios Dimitrios crossing point on the Green Line, the boundary running through the island and keeping it cloven in two radically disparate parts: the Republic of Cyprus, and the upper third of the island Turkey seized in 1974. Turkey has since held that part under illegal military occupation, and turned it into a rogue breakaway "state" called the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognized by Turkey only.

Dilapidated churches like St. Andronikos are a common sight here. As the journalist Michael Jansen observes, the north, full of 12,000 years of history at a key crossroads in the Mediterranean, now looks like a "cultural wasteland."

During and soon after the invasion, museums in the north and private collections were plundered, artworks were burned in pyres, stolen, or illegally exported, 21 major archaeological sites were captured—including the ancient city kingdoms of Salamis, Soli, and Engomi—along with more than a hundred places that had been inspected or were being excavated, four castles, and over 500 churches, chapels, and monasteries, most of them dating to the Byzantine period (4th-15th centuries). From the interiors were removed several major icons, mosaics, frescoes, Bibles, wood carvings, reliquaries, silver and gold vessels, and more. Sixteen thousand icons alone are reported missing.

The Church of Cyprus and the Republic of Cyprus have worked to repatriate, with some major successes,

Katherine Eastland is an assistant editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATHERINE EASTLAND

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several of these works through local, foreign, and international courts. But the list of damaged items and places keeps growing. As the occupation continues, so does destruction—whether by intent or neglect, or lack of adequate funds.

While much of the damage that took place in the north cannot be visited—most of the art hangs in other countries, was destroyed, or has been secreted away—the 500 religious buildings are still standing, at least for now. They remain as solid memories of a past that is flickering out as a new, and decidedly Turkish, culture develops in the north. The rise of that culture is quickened by the heavy influx of Turkish settlers, who currently outnumber the indigenous Turkish-Cypriot population by two-to-one. This cultural shift is apparent even in the cafés, where the drink of choice is black tea in tulip-shaped glass cups, the sort you can buy in twelve-packs in Istanbul. Town names are now Turkish, and the twin red-and-white flags of Turkey and the TRNC are everywhere—from mountain slopes to the rear windows of vans. Another part of this shift is seen in the churches which, with their ravaged cemeteries, are arguably the elements of Greek Cypriot culture that have suffered the most in the occupation. Divorced from their original use as houses of Christian worship, they are now in ruins or used for other purposes.

Most of the 500 buildings belong to the island's Greek Orthodox Church, one of the world's earliest, founded by St. Barnabas in 46 A.D. and decreed autocephalous in 431. Others are Catholic, Maronite, Armenian Apostolic, and Anglican; a few are synagogues. Nearly all of them can be visited; but about 50 are inaccessible since they stand within the U.N.-moderated buffer zone or Turkish military camps, where they are used as barracks, hospitals, cafeterias, and warehouses.

Over a fifth of the northern churches, like roofless St. Andronikos, have been skinned of their art and left to the elements and foraging animals. About 80 other churches still have a religious use as mosques. Some of them are modest, with creaky mihrabs and sheets thrown over what remains of the iconostasis (a gilt wall where icons once hung). Others are rich, with big-branched chandeliers of glass. In St. Paraskeve in Morphou the gilt bishop's throne and epistyle have been reassembled into a mihrab and mimbar. Some mosques that were formerly churches have been abandoned.

Remnants of a fresco at St. Andronikos church, Kythrea

Most of the churches have been cast in new, secular roles as garages, luxury hotels, granaries, storage rooms for furniture or potatoes or hay, classrooms, bars, cafés, and art studios. One is a morgue. A few, such as the St. Barnabas Monastery in the Karpass peninsula, have been set up as icon galleries with whitewashed walls, but the works on view are not native to the buildings and are young and relatively worthless, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Of the Christian buildings in the occupied north, three are kept, at least in appearance, as churches. But restrictions on their use and maintenance prevent Christians living in the north from worshiping in them regularly without interruption by Turkish officials.

The history of converting churches into mosques and mosques into churches, and of reappropriating buildings of any faith for secular purpose, is long and well documented. But the argument that Cyprus's occupied religious buildings, and the art within them, are legitimate spoils of war does not hold. In today's Europe, cultural property is seen as subsisting in a special niche that should be protected. Under the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), destruction of cultural heritage is considered a war crime. Furthermore, the European Union itself has several directives on cultural property—which Turkey would have to follow should it enter the EU. (Notably, one of the preconditions the EU has set for Turkey's admission is a settlement to the Cyprus problem; i.e., the island's reunification.)

This past summer in Washington the U.S. Helsinki Commission (CSCE), which monitors compliance between and among member states on the Helsinki accords, issued a 50-page report for Congress on the state of Cyprus's cultural and religious heritage, saying that it was "in peril" and that "under conventional and customary law, Turkey, as an occupying power, bears responsibility for acts against cultural property." It also numbers the various ways Turkey has violated international humanitarian law, as set forth in post-World War II treaties that Ankara has signed.

While there is a promising, but perhaps fatally slow-going, effort to reunify Cyprus by diplomatic means, the Church of Cyprus—which has remained independent through every vicissitude of political rule—believes it has a special, natural obligation to its religious heritage. But this heritage, especially if

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it's already in shambles, fades in importance when urgent matters such as governance and property distribution are being addressed by the diplomats drafting a political settlement for Cyprus. The churches themselves simply don't get much attention. But the Church, headed by Archbishop Chrysostomos II, is taking significant measures to try to save its property, usurped by the TRNC. And the Church reminds the EU that Turkey still has a long way to go before it conforms with EU policies.

Around Easter last year Chrysostomos opened an office in Brussels next to EU headquarters. When I met with him here in Nicosia—in his long office, featuring an icon of Christ in judgment on the wall behind his desk—he cheerfully said that at the new office there will always be a bishop to welcome EU parliamentarians and "present and promote our efforts." By doing this, Chrysostomos hopes to "exert some pressure with the hope that we will manage to restore all the monuments if possible before it's too late." Thirty-eight are near collapse.

"Of course, it goes without saying that I can see the huge difficulties associated with such a task, not to say its impossible nature. Unfortunately," he continues, "it seems to me that Europe does not know the real dimensions of the problem." Chrysostomos is frank about meddling in politics:

> I know that the government might be reacting to such an idea [direct involvement of the Church] especially at this time, but we will continue our efforts. We invited [Cypriot] President Christofias to come and inaugurate our offices with us in Brussels, but he didn't.

To further publicize the churches—and prepare as much as possible for their pending restoration—the Church has underwritten, through the Kykkos Monastery, the work of a young Byzantinist at the Hellenic Open University in Patras, Greece, to catalog all accessible religious monuments in the north. Professor Charalampos G. Chotzakoglou started work on the project with a team of archaeologists and other Byzantinists in 2003, when the Green Line was partially opened by the TRNC government, allowing people to cross the line freely for the first time since 1974. The Helsinki Commission consulted Chotzakoglou's detailed account when it drafted its report for Congress last summer.

Church interior, Nicosia district

Incomplete reports had been made before Chotzakoglou's, such as those by foreign journalists visiting the area, and by Turkish-Cypriot journalists such as Mehmet Yasin, who wrote some of the most eloquent testimonies. But the first report, UNESCO's in 1975, was shelved because UNESCO feared it was too damning! (It has only recently become available, and on a strictly limited basis.) The man who submitted this report—Jacques Dalibard of Canada, who was specially appointed by UNESCO to assess the state of cultural heritage after the 1974 war—was not even allowed access to some of the most damaged churches. Still, he wrote that the whole island of Cyprus should be "regarded as one huge monument," and that a team of specialists be dispatched solely to protect the remnants of Greek heritage in the north.

His suggestions were not followed.

Chotzakoglou's findings were published in a book in 2008 (*Religious Monuments in Turkish-Occupied Cyprus: Evidence and Acts of Continuous Destruction*; Lefkosia) and will soon be available in an online public database. He has also been tending to a similar project with Greek and Turkish Cypriots on all religious monuments on the island (Muslim and Christian), cyprustemples.com. It is a valuable site, but needs to be updated: Some of the recent destruction, such as the bulldozing of St. Catherine Church in Gerani in the summer of 2008, and its cannibalizing for buildings in the nearby village of Trikomo, has not been noted.

Incidentally, the razing of St. Catherine is not an isolated case: In the past five years 15 churches have been leveled. That such destruction still occurs is especially disappointing because, since 2007, there has been a special government-appointed technical committee of Greek and Turkish Cypriots dedicated to the maintenance and restoration of heritage on both sides of the island. (To be sure, these committees are destined to do only some good as long as Cyprus remains divided: Their success depends on the good faith of both sides to honor promises to restore the other side's damaged buildings.)

Destruction did occur to Muslim monuments south of the Green Line, mostly in the years leading up to the war, when both communities were fighting and the Turkish Cypriots, in the minority, bore the brunt of the

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violence. But the Church and the republic have worked to restore those buildings—no doubt hoping for a gesture of goodwill in return—and since 1989 the government has spent over $600,000 in the effort. So far, 17 historic mosques damaged and looted by Greek Cypriots have been restored. In 2000 the project to restore and protect all Muslim sites in the south began; the Department of Antiquities has recorded all their names and will guard them until they are renovated. This project should be completed sometime this year.

In a recent meeting proposed by the EU, the archbishop met with the mufti of northern Cyprus and said that he would welcome him as his guest in the south to inspect the Muslim sites. If the mufti did not find a site well preserved, he said, then "we as the Church of Cyprus would be willing to take full financial responsibility to restore it." In exchange, he told the mufti that he wanted him to "facilitate our crossing to the Turkish-occupied area in order to begin restoring our churches with our money. And we will bear any and all costs."

The mufti declined the offer, and suggested that one church in the north be restored for every mosque restored in the south. Deeming the mufti's proposal a "worthless gift"—there are far fewer mosques in the south than churches in the north, and it would take, at best, 500 years to renovate the north's 500 churches and "in 500 years there will be nothing for us to restore"—Chrysostomos rejected the counteroffer.

The north's "real policy," he believes, "is to procrastinate so the monuments themselves might be destroyed in time."

On the morning before I visited some of the northern churches, I walked through the Archbishop's Palace museum and looked at the art on view. In one room, I stopped by seven small wooden boxes, each with a glass top and containing a head of a saint, archangel, or Christ rendered in tesserae. The heads rested on white tissue paper that ran around their heads like second halos or bandages.

The master smuggler Aydin Dikmen had raggedly cut these exceptional late fifth/early sixth-century works—some of the few to have survived the rampant iconoclasm of the eighth century—from the walls of the Church of Panagía Kanakariá at Lythrankomí. Efforts at restoration and rocky international flights had weakened them further, causing them to crack. At one point, Dikmen tried to repair the loose tesserae—some with sockets of silver imported from Bethlehem—with Elmer's glue. While they once reminded a visitor of heaven and immaterial gain, they are now symbols of earth and material loss. Which is painful precisely because, as Chrysostomos says, "these are not just art objects for us."

The case for the restoration of these churches, and the art within them, is compelling—and the loss to art history and to Cypriot culture is immense and immeasurable. Until the island is one again—which could happen in four months or four decades—its two sides will continue to diverge, becoming more lopsided, with a Turkish culture taking root in the north amid the continuing collapse of its Hellenic heritage.

Whatever happens to Cyprus, there remains an eloquent, otherworldly hope, as expressed by Paul in a letter to the Christians at Corinth at about the same time the Church of Cyprus was founded by his coworker Barnabas: "For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Paul's thought is especially poignant when you're standing inside a church in early ruin, or looking at a torn mosaic—things that were made, at one time, as if to last. ♦

B&A

Executive Action

The balancing of liberty and security in wartime.

BY JAY WEISER

The hysteria over the Bush administration's use of executive power in the war on terror has faded—even the "War on Terror" slogan has faded—but the terrorist challenge and the two wars it spawned continue, with a financial catastrophe laid on top like a maraschino cherry. In this salient book, Eric Posner and Adrian Vermeule argue that in an emergency, the executive branch should have near-complete discretion, and that Congress and the courts should stand aside. Even though this may allow the executive to act opportunistically, they contend that because the other branches of government lack speed, flexibility, and expertise, the alternatives are worse. Posner and Vermeule demonstrate rapid legal changes in emergencies—Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, Wilson's press censorship, FDR's internment of Japanese Americans, and Bush's terrorism detentions and wiretaps are of a piece.

Terror in the Balance
Security, Liberty, and the Courts
by Eric A. Posner and Adrian Vermeule
Oxford, 328 pp., $35

This book is most relevant at its edges, where it explores the limits of executive power in a dangerous, mutating environment never anticipated by existing law. The authors overstate their primary case—even at the moment of maximum crisis, the executive is never as omnipotent as it seems. And they warn that an over-fastidious approach to executive power can create dangers in novel situations—something the Obama administration seems eager to demonstrate with its planned criminal trial of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

Jay Weiser is associate professor of law at CUNY.

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The authors' tight reasoning picks apart the panic theory, democratic failure theory, and other arguments made by executive power opponents. This, and related excursions into political theory, constitutional law, and history back to 1798's Alien and Sedition Acts, can be heavy going for nonspecialist readers; but the clear writing exposes the illogical premises in an overwrought debate.

Others have been seduced by theory, by the way: Posner's sometime coauthor, former deputy attorney general John Yoo, spun some theories of near-limitless executive power that ultimately torpedoed his White House clients. Ironically, Yoo's overreaching inspired an opposite overreach by the Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón, who has claimed universal jurisdiction to prosecute Yoo's purported human rights violations.

The apparently boundless emergency executive power that Posner/Vermeule identify is actually a product of consensus. Presidents often reach across party lines early in crises, appointing cabinet members from the other party and downplaying partisan doctrine. This was the real reason for Lincoln's "team of rivals"—not Doris Kearns Goodwin's gag-inducing Kumbaya campfire sing-along. By appointing political heavyweights with Democratic roots, Lincoln credibly demonstrated his shared priority of preserving the Union rather than destroying slavery. Franklin Roosevelt replaced Dr. New Deal with Dr. Win-the-War and switched Republican allies, too, jettisoning isolationist progressive supporters of his domestic policies (such as Nebraska senator George Norris) in favor of conservative internationalists like Secretary of War Henry Stimson. The Obama administration is walking a similar tightrope, with its core Democratic constituency lukewarm on Afghanistan and terrorism, while Republicans support an assertive policy.

As Posner/Vermeule note, emergencies decay: Madison's constitutional system won't tolerate unconstrained power for long periods. In contrast, civil libertarians, imprisoned by their own theories, assert a national security ratchet: Civil liberties, once violated, are never restored, restrictions compound on each other, and oppression calcifies into doom. The authors show that this has all the historical verisimilitude of an erotic horror novel. Restrictions have never outlasted emergencies: After the peak danger, courts and Congress reassert power. The Supreme Court stopped Truman's steel mill seizure (which took place after the Korean war had stabilized) and as the Cold War became normalized, struck down anti-Communist free speech restrictions. Within five years after 9/11, courts began to strike down administration legal practices relating to the detention of unlawful combatants.

Lincoln shared the authors' scorn for the ratchet, refusing to believe that

> the American people will, by means of military arrests during the rebellion, lose the right of public discussion, the liberty of speech and the press, the law of evidence, trial by jury, and Habeas corpus, throughout the indefinite peaceful future. . . . any more than I am able to believe that a man could contract so strong an appetite for emetics during temporary illness, as to persist in feeding upon them through the remainder of his healthful life.

If anything, Posner/Vermeule suggest, after emergencies are safely over, a libertarian ratchet generates pious, guilt-ridden, untenable grants of civil liberties. And unfortunately, Attorney General Eric Holder shares the left's ratchet fantasy: The attempted closure of Guantánamo was his initial foray into unreality. Now the Mohammed trial implies full constitutional rights for terrorists operating abroad and attacking on American soil. The possibilities are boundless. Miranda warnings before battlefield interrogations? A Fourth Amendment squadron that obtains warrants before Kabul car bomb searches? Eighth Amendment bans on drone attacks unless death penalty procedural requirements are followed? Will the courts allow any criminal prosecution where there was waterboarding?

Because both the authors and ratchet aficionados focus on the peak of emergencies, they underplay how the political environment affects the duration of an emergency. In unity governments cooperation continues even when frustrated voters hit presidents' parties with major midterm election losses (Lincoln 1862, FDR 1942, Truman 1946). In partisan governments, with little goodwill going into the emergency, executive power is immediately contested and decays more rapidly (John Adams's Quasi-War against France, Jefferson's Embargo, Madison's War of 1812, Woodrow Wilson's Versailles Treaty). Some presidents change midstream: In the early Cold War Harry Truman consulted Republicans and used George Marshall's name rather than his own for the Marshall Plan; but his highly partisan 1948 campaign (even painting the mild-mannered Thomas E. Dewey as a front man for fascists) led to a loss of support on China, Korea, and internal security.

The decay rate also depends on whose ox is gored. Support lasts longer when the targets are foreigners or anti-capitalist radicals (World War I, World War II, Cold War) as opposed to mainstream voters. John Adams wrecked his presidency with the Alien and Sedition Acts; in contrast, Lincoln cultivated War Democrats by limiting his anti-Copperhead sanctions to expulsions or brief imprisonment. With the civil rights era, things changed. After 9/11 U.S. Muslims, as a minority with limited political power and a small radicalized component, offered a tempting target to justify the expansion of executive power; but President Bush denounced those who wanted to demonize them. (Unfortunately, the libertarian ratchet went so far toward political correctness that Major Nidal Malik Hasan, an open Islamist, was able to earn an Army promotion before shooting over 40 people, killing 13.)

The longer the emergency, the greater the need to normalize the executive's innovations. But this is not, as Posner/Vermeule suggest, primarily about Congress and the courts reining in the executive. There is a Constitution with teeth in emergencies—just not a written one. The emergency Constitution, like Britain's, is based on custom, with a bipartisan war cabinet exercising substantial powers. The president is expected to obtain consent to major

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actions in advance from congressional leaders and key committee heads of both parties. When this is impossible, Congress expects a thorough briefing, the right to informal ratification, and an agreed course for the future. (Backdoor contacts with the courts are not unknown, either.) FDR's first Inaugural Address, delivered after the banking system had collapsed, was a blunt statement of this unwritten Constitution: If Congress failed to rapidly pass his legislative program or its own, he said:

> It may be that an unprecedented demand and need for undelayed action may call for temporary departure from that normal balance of public procedure. . . . [I]n the event that the national emergency is still critical . . . I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.

The disastrous National Industrial Relations Act, which authorized FDR to cartelize the economy, came close to an unlimited grant of executive power. But other Hundred Days legislation delegated more limited authority, and even at the peak of the crisis in 1933, with Republicans only a small congressional minority, the Republican senator Arthur Vandenberg was able to shove the FDIC down FDR's throat, despite the president's fears that deposit insurance would create moral hazard.

As the scope of the emergency and methods for dealing with it become clear, some emergency powers decay, but others get legislative authorization. After a partial economic recovery, the Supreme Court struck down the NRA in 1935, but FDR's Second Hundred Days legislatively revived several cartelizing NRA policies: the Wagner Act for union organizing, the Hot Oil Act for oil prices, and the Robinson-Patman Act to protect small retailers from chain store competition. With our current financial crisis past the acute stage, Congress and the Obama administration are trying to codify risk-reduction regulations for too-big-to-fail institutions. The National Security Act normalized the permanent Cold War crisis by mandating confidential executive consultations on sensitive matters with congressional leaders, but not with the whole Congress. On waterboarding, this worked: The Bush administration scrupulously followed the NSA, briefing congressional leaders, who gave their blessing, despite (then-ranking Democratic House Intelligence Committee member) Nancy Pelosi's recent attempts at revisionist history.

This messy process of consultation, informal consensus, and executive action bears no relationship to the minimalist Constitution-in-exile beloved of some conservative scholars; it's the Constitution-locked-in-the-attic, the crazy aunt everybody knows is there but is too polite to talk about. During the 2008 financial meltdown Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, Fed Chair Benjamin Bernanke, and then-New York Fed chief Timothy Geithner radically intervened in financial markets to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars—and then, with almost no legal authority, effectively seized AIG. Neither Congress nor the courts emitted a peep at this Beltway Putinism. When, with world financial collapse imminent, Paulson asked for $700 billion in no-strings TARP money, Congress squawked, attached some conditions—and signed on the dotted line. Nancy Pelosi, by then House speaker, formally supported the legislation, but turned around and denounced the perfidious Republicans on the House floor.

This violated the unwritten Constitution, which demands that the deal receive its Brangelina moment, where the opposing parties bill and coo at each other, gaze adoringly at the baby drooling in the busted stroller as they sign the adoption papers, and swear that they love it for its beautiful soul.

The unwritten emergency Constitution runs on trust. The other branches refrain from exercising their legal powers only as long as Congress's voice counts in policy decisions, and Congress and the courts trust what they are told. Posner, in his *Law and Social Norms*, has observed that a person's compliance with social norms signals whether they are reliable to deal with—which also applies to the norms of the unwritten Constitution. When trust goes, the written Constitution's checks and balances roar back, and the executive gets ensnared, to the national detriment. Although one line of conservative thought blames weak executive power for congressional overreach in the 1970s, the real cause was Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon's destruction of executive credibility. In the real world, excessive claims for emergency executive power can undermine it. ♦

John Yoo and demonstrators, Berkeley, 2009

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B&A

Gigi in Hollywood

Postcards from the transatlantic life of Leslie Caron.

BY KATE LIGHT

On the set of 'Les Quatre Vérités,' 1962

If, hovering around the tell-all memoir genre, another category exists—such as, say, the "tell-some"—then *Thank Heaven*, with its excellent blend of exposure and decorum, falls gracefully within it.

Leslie Caron is a good writer with a volume of short stories—*Vengeance* (1982)—under her belt, as well as (as she puts it) "a few scripts." Her concision, grace, and good taste still leave room for revelations aplenty—though since many of the anecdotes are one-liners at heart, repeating them would make a reviewer a spoiler. Though she may not often delve deeply into any given story, the outer edges that she navigates are just so darn interesting that it doesn't much matter. However decorously told, there is plenty to savor.

Thank Heaven
A Memoir
by Leslie Caron
Viking/Penguin, 288 pp., $25.95

Kate Light, poet and violinist in the New York City Opera, is the author, most recently, of Open Slowly.

For instance, behind the scenes of *Gigi* (the musicalization of which was Caron's idea), was her pregnancy with a second child. (Look at the publicity and behind-the-scenes photos to see how surprising this is.) Do the fans of the ingénue of *An American in Paris* and *Gigi* know that this Parisian was in Paris during the German Occupation, piecing together slivers of soap, picking maggots out of food, eating bread half-made of sawdust?

Those of us who can't resist turning to the photos first will see them grow in resonance and meaning, turned to again in the course of reading or after. The first are of her (lovely) grandmother and her American mother, each dramatically costumed; it was that kind of family. The childhood begins in idyllic times on her grandparents' enormous farm-estate which served as a summer residence. Soon comes the German invasion and occupation and horrendous times, the well-to-do family sinking from riches to something in the vicinity of rags. It is not quite clear how difficult things got, for though her parents managed to send Leslie and her brother to a summer camp of sorts, we also hear that young Leslie gave away her "second shirt" to a homeless woman. It was impossible not to be greatly affected by what was happening all around.

As an 11-year-old, young Caron studied ballet at the same decrepit studio she would later recognize as Zelda Fitzgerald's, fictionalized in *Save Me the Waltz*; she often swooned from malnourishment in class. Studying with Roland Petit's teacher of choice, in due time he appeared in class himself and selected Leslie for his Ballets des la Champs-Elysees. From there, Gene Kelly spotted her and invited her to Hollywood for a screen test—presumably successfully, though she calls herself "the shyest star ever." Holed up in a seamy hotel with her mother, it was some time before she began to live a star's life. (Eventually she was taken to the studio's costume department to get clothes decent enough to appear in public.)

Her career as a professional ballet dancer continued, with appearances in Petit's company long after her move to Hollywood. Dancing was her serious art, no mere star's gimmick; late in life she still held, and struggled with, her sense of herself as a dancer who acted rather than the opposite identity one might expect. She used her influence to obtain needed (if rather pedestrian) film work for Petit's entire troop. She does not note the irony of being a Parisian girl coming to America to film a movie about an American coming to Paris. Or to continue to ride the biographical seesaw, that her own dancer-mother was an American in Paris, marrying a French man.

Beyond stage and screen, the acting continued, for things were not as they seemed. At the time of *Gigi*, Caron's second marriage, to the British director Peter Hall, foundered: He disparaged her abilities and discouraged her career, later admitting that it was professional jealousy that drove him, not

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his professed wish for a "traditional" wife. But despite being under Hall's frown of disapproval, and sometimes with one or two children in tow, Caron continued to travel and work while her husband rarely visited, and, looming in the background, seemed to acknowledge her need neither for work nor for his support or company. Lonely and disappointed, and by now shedding some of the moral reticence of her protected, Roman Catholic upbringing, she admits to affairs on locations.

As the first decades of her life were spent under a succession of thumbs—first her mother (later alcoholic and a suicide), then the Hollywood studio's rules and chaperones, next the aforementioned husband, followed by a desperately needy Warren Beatty, not to mention the constant watchful eyes of the tabloids and the church—it shouldn't surprise that she would finally break free with a flurry of good times and partying, accepting role after role.

When Caron left school early to dance, her mother helped out by providing a precocious and somewhat bizarre reading list. What young Leslie wasn't given she discovered for herself; and so, despite a lack of formal education, she became well read, alert to languages, and sophisticated in her literary leanings, paving the way to an international career in the truest sense. Her cosmopolitan nature granted her hundreds of regal friends and acquaintances, and her career spanned an astonishing array of film and stage roles. Her directors ranged from America's Gene Kelly and Vincent Minnelli, to Canada's Arthur Hiller, to France's René Clair, François Truffaut, and Jean Renoir, Bryan Forbes and Ken Russell in England, in Italy, Nanni Loy and Franco Zeffirelli (and a near-miss with Federico Fellini), Krzysztof Zanussi in Poland, and more. She crosses paths with Fred Astaire, Christopher Isherwood, Rock Hudson, Ingrid Bergman, Orson Welles, Noel Coward, David Niven, Natalie Wood, Elizabeth Taylor, and more. She champions struggling actors and directors—Zero Mostel after his blacklisting; Montgomery Clift, whose reputation rendered him unemployable—and among the Hollywood stories is how eerily close she and her family came to renting the house in which Roman Polanski would briefly live with his wife Sharon Tate and where she was brutally murdered.

In later years, as roles came less frequently, and she struggled with alcohol and depression, Caron reinvented herself as the creator of a small-town *auberge*, leaving her months of construction and contracting to do the occasional acting role. The *auberge* is clearly a remarkable place, and she emerges from her depression at peace with the world and her family, bringing us these enlivening tales of an extraordinary career, from a golden time which still resonates. ♦

B&A

Roget for Moderns

The words of English get the Oxford treatment.

BY EDWARD SHORT

Virginia Woolf once said that the word for writing should not be *composition*, which hardly gives an accurate idea of the stitching and unstitching that writing requires, but *revision*. Like Cardinal Newman and Winston Churchill, Woolf wrote standing up, so the onerousness of writing was something of which she was particularly conscious. But whether standing or sitting, all writers must not only choose but find their words, and that can be madly frustrating.

The Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary
edited by Christian Kay, Jane Roberts, Michael Samuels, and Irené Wotherspoon Crane
Oxford, two vols., 3,952 pp., $395

Enter Peter Mark Roget (1779-1869), the polymath behind the eponymous *Thesaurus* who, for generations, has come to the rescue of word-hunting writers. Born in Soho, London, Roget was the son of the Huguenot pastor of the French Protestant church on Little Deab Street. His mother was the sister of Samuel Romilly, the parliamentarian and law reformer, from whom he inherited his peculiarly methodical intelligence. After obtaining a medical degree at Edinburgh, Roget went on to distinguish himself in a number of different métiers before devoting himself to his *Thesaurus*.

He practiced medicine in Manchester, lectured on animal physiology in Bloomsbury, collaborated with Jeremy Bentham on a scheme to invent a food-preserving "frigidarium" decades before the refrigerator was invented, advised the Millbank penitentiary during an epidemic of dysentery, advised Her Majesty's Government on London's water supply, became private secretary to Viscount Howick (later the Whig prime minister Earl Grey), worked out chess problems that had baffled players for centuries, invented the logo-logarithmic slide rule (which would later solve many hitherto unsolved problems in electrical engineering), and was the author of over 100 publications—including one that demonstrated that if a revolving carriage wheel was viewed through a vertical Venetian blind the boards would not obstruct the appearance of continuous movement, a finding which would have huge implications for the motion picture and the stroboscope.

Beginning in 1805 and throughout his endlessly inventive life, Roget made entries in notebooks, which were like lexical storehouses designed to bring the wild variety of English under a classifiable rule, though it was not until he was 61 that he managed to work on the project full-time. As a result of his far-

Edward Short is a writer in New York.

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ranging reading, Roget was aware that others had attempted to classify words. The Sanskrit grammarian and poet Asmarha Sinha had compiled a classification of Sanskrit words called the *Amata-Kosha* in the fourth century. And in the late 18th century another classification of words was published in Paris under the title *Pasgragraphie*. But no one had ever attempted such a thing in English. Roget set out to classify English words in such a way as to assist not only philologists but ordinary readers, writers, and researchers. He completed his mammoth task when he was 73 and it was published by Longman in 1852. By the time of his death, Roget's *Thesaurus* had gone through 28 printings, wearing out the original plates.

In 1952 Everyman's Library brought out a revision of the world-famous *Thesaurus* to mark its hundredth anniversary, in which the editor wrote:

> In the course of its century of use Roget's *Thesaurus* has come to be as widely accepted and as indispensable to writers as a dictionary, and its system and arrangement have become so familiar that any radical alteration of them would lessen the value of the book to those who know their way about it from constant use. For that reason no attempt has been made to modify the main scheme which Roget originally laid down.

Nearly 60 years later Roget is still in print, and crossword-puzzle aficionados, writers, poets, students, journalists, and word-desperate reviewers are as reliant on its helpful classifications as ever. Now Oxford University Press has published a two-volume historical thesaurus, based on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which completely renovates Roget's scheme.

Based on 40 years of research conducted by a team of 230 scholars at the University of Glasgow, this *Historical Thesaurus* offers not only more classifications but more precise classifications, comprising 236,400 categories and subcategories.

This is where the new thesaurus differs from (and improves on) Roget. As the Manx-born linguist Randolph Quirk notes in his foreword, the "veritable universal taxonomy" that the Glasgow team of scholars devised for this new work is "subtler and more detailed" than the scheme devised by Roget. In compiling the book, the editors drew on prototype theory and cognitive semantics. The system of the *Historical Thesaurus of the OED*, writes Quirk, "has evolved in a recursive interplay between a priori postulation (and initial use of Roget's categories)" and "the input richness of the *OED* material."

Quirk brings his considerable expertise to bear to endorse the genuine marvels of the new thesaurus, which is not intended so much to supplant as to complement the earlier work. For the sake of convenience, most writers will still continue to use some form of a desktop Roget. But for writers and researchers looking for words for more exacting or scholarly purposes—or for word browsers of all kinds—the new thesaurus will be indispensable. And at $395 the two volumes are not cheap but they are a good investment.

The new scheme breaks down thus. There are three main categories: the world, the mind, and society. These are then broken down still further. Under the world, the book classifies the earth, life, physical sensibility, matter, existence in time and space, relative properties, and the supernatural. Under the mind are listed mental capacity, emotion, philosophy, aesthetics, will/faculty of will, refusal/denial, having/possession, and language. And finally, under society are listed society/the community, inhabiting/dwelling, armed hostility, authority, morality, education, faith, communication, travel/traveling, occupation/work, and leisure. This is the "veritable universal taxonomy" of which Quirk writes.

Since the new book is based, like the *OED*, on historical principles, it gives the reader a sense not only of the range of the *OED*, for which it serves as a kind of map, but a detailed understanding of the historical evolution of finely classified strands of synonyms.

For example, the word "terrorism" entered the language in 1798 following the Reign of the French Terror, though the word "terror" entered as early as 1528, with the word "Turk," to connote terribleness, entering shortly thereafter in 1598. All of these words can be found under the heading "quality of terribleness." But one can also find "terrorism" and "terrorist" under the heading "oppression," where one will also find "tamerlane/tamberlaine" (1579-1632) and "sultanism" (1821). When two dates are given for a particular entry, instead of a single date, this denotes the first and last recorded *OED* citations for that sense.

Under "types of war" (there is no subcategory for "man-made disaster") there are entries for "holy war" (1603), "crescentade" (1868), and "jihad" (1880). Under the heading "contending in battle," there is a lively array of words, including "battling" (1300), "fighting" (1340), "joining the battle" (1548), and "buckling" (1563). Then again, more narrowly, there is "push of pike" (1596-1852) under "fighting at close quarters" and under "guerrilla fighting" there are two entries, "bushwacking," an American term (1864), and "bush-fighting" (1760-1837).

Then, under "contentment/satisfaction," we have the word "appeaser" entering the language in 1869. Continuing along the trail, there are additional synonyms, under the general heading "bringing about concord," "peace," and the more specific subheading "appeasing/pacifying/propitiating," including "gladung" (Old English), "mitigation" (1382), "queming" (1440), and "placation" (1589). Under the general heading "pacification" there is "peacemonger" (1808), which the European editors gratuitously signify ("derog."), though under "international politics/relations" they do manage to call a spade a spade by listing "appeasement" (1919) under "appeasement," together with "Munich" (1938), "Munichism" (1941), and "Municheer" (1942).

"Truckle" (1680) is another good illustrative word. Under the general rubric "be servile," the book lists, among many others, "fawn" (1440), "creep" (1596), "spaniel" (1599), "grovel" (1605), "kiss (another's) arse/behind/bum" (1705), "crouch the knee" (1815-1854), "kow-tow" (1826), and "toady" (1861). "Spaniel," as the literary critic Caroline Spurgeon showed,

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was a word that obsessed Shakespeare.

"Incompetence" (1876) offers good examples of how the new thesaurus finely divides categories. Under the general heading "disorders of internal organs," and the more specific subheading "disordered functioning," the book lists "incompetence" with "ataxy" (1670), "over-action" (1741), "excitement" (1788-1801), "perversion" (1842), "stammering" (1855), and "hypermotility" (1894). Then under "inability" we have "incompetency" (1611) together with "infirmity" (1382-1796), "un-ability" (1400-1769), "non-ability" (1477-1697), "invalidity" (1598-1698), "un-capableness" (1611-1727), "incapacity" (1611), "incompatibility" (1659) and "unfitness" (1885).

Under the general heading of "insufficiency," the book sheds light on yet more finely calibrated shades of meaning. Under the subheading "insufficiency for the needs of the case," the book lists "unsatisfactoriness" (1643), "inadequateness" (1681), and "inadequacy" (1787). Under the subheading "deficiency/lack/shortage," the book includes "wane" (Old English), "default" (1300-1825), "wanting" (1300), "absence" (1398), "lack" (1398), "want" (1400), "defect" (1589), "vacuity" (1601-1822), and "deficiency" (1634).

The new *Historical Thesaurus* is a return to form for the research division of Oxford University Press which, in the recent past, has not always maintained its accustomed high standards. Jesse Sheidlower, for example, editor at large of the newest edition of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (2007), did that (heretofore) superb reference work no favors by relaxing its historical principles. One of the reasons the *Historical Thesaurus of the OED* is so welcome is that it restores those principles to their rightful prominence, which will enable readers to trace the living language in all its historical glory.

Roget would have approved. ♦

B&A

American Murder

A theory why we're prone to kill one another.

BY CHRISTINE ROSEN

Why do Americans kill each other? It is not an idle question for a nation that has the highest homicide rate among the world's affluent democracies. For decades, evolutionary biologists, psychologists, and sociologists have offered competing theories. Recently, criminologists who study deterrence have examined legitimacy—a broad term used to describe a community's trust in local law enforcement and in the justice system's fairness in sentencing, among other things—to explain fluctuations in homicide rates.

American Homicide
by Randolph Roth
Harvard, 672 pp., $45

Over the years historians have also offered explanations for the country's violent tendencies, ranging from the upheavals caused by immigration and urbanization to the deep-rooted honor culture of the 19th-century South. In *American Homicide*, Randolph Roth, professor of history and sociology at Ohio State, offers an intriguing hypothesis to explain the country's homicide rates: Murder isn't personal; it's political. Drawing on the work of criminologist Gary LaFree, who argues that, in the 20th century, the crime rate increased when people reported greater distrust in government and other social institutions, Roth looks back through American history and locates a similar force at work over the previous century-and-a-half.

According to Roth, homicide rates among unrelated adults "are not determined by proximate causes such as poverty, drugs, unemployment, alcohol, race, or ethnicity." Nor are they influenced by stricter prison sentences or other tough-on-crime measures. Rather, the homicide rate is driven by four factors that might seem surprisingly removed from murder and mayhem: Americans' belief that "government is stable and that its legal and judicial institutions are unbiased and will redress wrongs and protect lives and property"; feelings of trust in government and a belief in the legitimacy of government officials; a sense of patriotism and "fellow feeling" among citizens; and the "belief that the social hierarchy is legitimate" and that within it a person "can command the respect of others without resorting to violence."

When these feelings are absent, Roth argues, societies become predisposed to violence.

America's peculiarly violent history has its roots in the mid-19th century, when homicide rates began to rise much more dramatically than in Western Europe. Roth locates the cause as the country's failure to "coalesce into a nation."

> As the country struggled through the wrenching and divisive changes of the mid-19th century—the crises over slavery and immigration, the decline in self-employment and the rise of industrialized cities—the patriotic faith in government that most Americans had felt so strongly after the Revolution was undermined by anger and distrust.

A kind of national alienation set in, and violence soon followed. With few exceptions during the 20th century, ours has remained the most murderous democracy in the world.

Roth admits that his emphasis on political feelings is only a hypothesis; but it is a bold one. In positing that the political climate influences homicide rates, he rejects several strands of conventional wisdom about the causes of

Christine Rosen, a senior editor at the New Atlantis, *is the author, most recently, of* My Fundamentalist Education: A Memoir of Divine Girlhood.

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crime: He dismisses the argument (first made by sociologist Norbert Elias) that the United States simply hasn't traveled far enough along the "civilizing process" to neutralize its homicidal impulses. But he also rejects both traditionally liberal arguments about homicide (that it can be traced to poverty and lack of opportunity) and traditionally conservative ones (more police on the street and stricter sentences will deter murderers).

Roth's intriguing thesis does raise some questions, however. Although he and his colleagues at Ohio State are compiling an extensive statistical database, the Historical Violence Database, to study homicide rates throughout history, the question nevertheless remains: How do you measure feelings and beliefs such as patriotism and legitimacy, the things Roth views as central to understanding why Americans kill? Can you quantify trust? Roth points to things such as the number of new counties named for national heroes as examples of faith in government: "The best predictor of increases and declines in America's homicide rate has been the percentage of new counties named for national heroes," he writes, and "when Americans stopped identifying with each other through national heroes, they killed each other more often."

But this indirect measure of identification does not adequately explore the difference between faith in government institutions at the local level, where most policing occurs, and at the federal level, where policymaking prevails. Contradictory impulses can coexist. It is possible to place great faith and legitimacy in one's local police force while simultaneously harboring serious doubts about a particular president or members of Congress. You can love Barney Fife but mistrust Barney Frank.

As well, although Roth is concerned with the legitimacy of political institutions, he says little about the role that media or culture plays in encouraging or discouraging faith in government. Cultural historians have offered many arguments for the role newspapers and other media have played in shaping Americans' attitudes toward their government and its institutions over the past two centuries. Roth's work would have benefited from a more sustained engagement with that rich historiography.

Finally, Roth spends little time exploring another important yet impossible to quantify thing that is nonetheless integral to a well-functioning society: the character of a society's citizens. The self-control, emotional maturity, and ability to delay gratification vital to creating nonviolent, active participants in a society is not (for Roth) as central as trust in political institutions. But these qualities of good character are surely the building blocks for broader feelings such as patriotism. And as psychology and sociology have taught us, these vital traits must be learned at an early age, preferably within the context of stable families and communities.

Is distrust of government really the main force driving homicide? If it is, then Roth's argument might provide fodder for the powerful to suppress dissent. Who could argue with an administration that cracked down on anti-government protestors in the name of lowering homicide rates for all? In this climate, perhaps Nixon-style enemies lists would be viewed as more effective prophylactic measures against homicide than our current culture of Americans angrily sniping at each other from the virtual safety of their respective partisan political websites or on cable news shows.

In the end, whether or not we embrace Roth's thesis as definitive, his provocative and wide-ranging history persuasively argues for the benefits of a less divisive and polarized political culture. After all, if Roth is right, it just might be killing us. ♦

B&A

Verdict on 'Avatar'

Not so much politically offensive as just plain stupid.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

As *Avatar* closes in on the all-time box office record set by its director's previous film, *Titanic*, journalists and bloggers looking for a fresh angle on the movie—one that didn't involve its brilliant but boring-to-read-about special effects—finally came to rest on its politics. One of the only published reviews to discuss the movie's ideological frame in a critical manner was mine; it appeared in this space a few weeks ago. And so, every hour or so, a Google Alert has appeared in my mailbox with one piece or other quoting my contention that the movie "does ask the audience to root for the defeat of American soldiers at the hands of an insurgency," and is therefore "anti-American."

Now, what I actually said was that *Avatar* was "anti-American—kind of" because "one would be giving James Cameron too much credit to take *Avatar* . . . at all seriously as a political document. . . . He wrote it this way not to be controversial, but quite the opposite: He was making something he thought would be most pleasing to the greatest number of people."

In other words, I *don't* think *Avatar* is a politically meaningful work of popular art. Rather, it's interesting in this regard only because it is illustrative of what Hollywood thinks is acceptably anodyne when it comes to such fare: mystical mushy enviro-nonsense spouted by pacifist characters who are beyond reproach because they are not actually human and who then happily turn around and commit mass murder themselves against humans in the name of pacifism and environmentalism.

Cameron himself told the *New York Times* that he is a "child of the '60s. There's a part of me who wants to put a

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

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daisy in the end of the gun barrel." The sophistication of that perspective was matched recently when he declared, "I believe in eco-terrorism." Interesting. One wonders just how gigantic is the carbon footprint left by a movie that cost anywhere from $300 million to $500 million and whose major publicity partner is McDonalds. Maybe an eco-terrorist could do the math.

Some of those Google Alerts link to articles that simply take me to task for being on the right, which I am, and which is certainly a crime in the eyes of many. "It is fascinating to see how today's ideology-obsessed conservatives have managed to walk away from such a crowd-pleasing triumph and see only the film's political subtext, not the groundbreaking artistry," sniffed Patrick Goldstein of the *Los Angeles Times*, even as he offered words of celebration for *Avatar* as a "peaceful warrior film, celebrating the newly aroused consciousness of a Marine turned defender of a higher faith." Note that all I did was offer a description of *Avatar* as a work that depicts American military personnel in a very negative light whose violent deaths we are directed to applaud, and then tell people not to take it seriously; Goldstein actually *wants* you to take it seriously. So do other film types, who are positively enthralled by *Avatar*'s politics: "Somewhere," writes the high-energy movie blogger Jeffrey Wells, "Ho Chi Minh is smiling."

Such reactions have led me to revise my take on Cameron's injection of a political attitude into his ludicrous and empty-noggined epic. He did something far more canny than I realized: By echoing both trendy green ideas and 1960s blather, and repurposing them to a planet far, far away two centuries from now, he actually gave the film a patina of respectability among the filmerati that has all but assured it victory at the Academy Awards. Thus, David Denby in the *New Yorker*: "The continuity of dynamized space that he has achieved with 3-D gloriously supports his trippy belief that all living things are one." Quoth Manohla Dargis in the *New York Times*: "An Emersonian exploration of the invisible world of the spirit filled with Cameronian rock 'em, sock 'em pulpy action."

At least Denby and Dargis know when they're being stroked. Would that such were the case with some folk of differing political perspectives who have talked themselves into believing that the movie is (in the words of Ann Marlowe, a sometime contributor to these pages) "the most neocon movie ever made." Or the paleoconservative Steve Sailer, declaring that Cameron is the heir to the libertarian science-fiction writer Robert Heinlein—and an assault on evil neocons who can't fathom that "Cameron is pro-soldier and anti-war, a combination the neocons find shocking."

Sam Worthington, Zoë Saldana

Or the agrarian Caleb Stegall, who suggests that the reason the movie appeals to him but not to people like me, presumably rootless cosmopolites with no connection to the blood and the soil, is that "they do not have, and have never had, any sense of dispossession or loss. They have never loved or lived anywhere deeply enough to imagine defending it as a particular place or way. They are placeless free agents, triumphant, world-striding. Sure, the materialistic, acquisitive, military-industrial-corporate-statist complex is a clichéd trope. But if the cliché fits …"

What all this proves is that James Cameron is a genius, even though *Avatar* is remarkably stupid, taken on its own merits. Indeed, that, and not the evils of its politics, is the consensus view of the critics writing for conservative publications. In my review, in Ross Douthat's in *National Review* and in Stephen Hunter's in *Commentary*, the word "stupid" is used not as a pejorative but as a descriptive, and that is the central point of all three pieces.

No matter. Cameron is a genius because he has produced a work that can be seen as a Ho Chi Minh fever dream, an LSD trip, a neoconservative epic, a libertarian opera, and a threnody for the Sons and Daughters of the Confederacy. Maybe this is only achievable when you make something that is, at root, so thematically basic that it can become a vessel for the projection of whatever ideological passion grips its viewer at that moment.

One odd thing about *Avatar*: It is unquestionably a sensation, but it is not a *cultural* sensation. It hasn't entered the cultural conversation in the way that even Cameron's own *Titanic* did. Its closing song isn't the giant hit "My Heart Will Go On" was for *Titanic* and its sentimental catchphrase—"I see you," exchanged by the two giant blue lovers who are connected via fiber-optic cable—hasn't crossed over into the vernacular.

I offer these words of conciliation toward *Avatar* in the spirit of our times because, like Barack Obama, I reject false choices—in this case, between seeing *Avatar* as a work of anti-Americanism and seeing it as a work of blithering idiocy. Just as I believe children are our future, I believe that *Avatar* can be, and is, both. ♦

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"President Obama signaled on Wednesday that he might be willing to scale back his proposed health care overhaul to a version that could attract bipartisan support, as the White House and Congressional Democrats grappled with a political landscape transformed by the Republican victory in the Massachusetts Senate race."

—New York Times, *January 20, 2010*

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DEMOCRATS HAIL PASSAGE OF REVISED HEALTH CARE BILL

'Slightly Scaled Back' Version Features Trial Membership at Gold's Gym

By SHERYL GAY STOLBERG and DAVID M. HERSZENHORN

WASHINGTON — In a Rose Garden ceremony, President Obama signed into law the historic Keep America Healthy By Eating SnackWells® Health Reform Act, which, after lengthy negotiations, had been slightly pared back to win approval in both the House and the Senate. And though the final bill did not provide coverage for all Americans (or tax so-called Cadillac insurance plans, penalize the uninsured, or require insurance providers to accept individuals with preexisting conditions), it did allow for all Americans to join their nearest Gold's Gym in a monthlong trial offer, after which they would be asked to sign a three-year contract. "The idea," explained the president, "is that those monthly fees are so high and you are locked in that you'll have no choice but to work out and by doing so, maintain a healthy lifestyle."

But as Mr. Obama noted, "the health revolution doesn't stop there." In addition, American families will be eligible for a year's supply of Nutrisystem frozen cuisine. Coupons for Nabisco SnackWells products and select Subway sandwiches (namely, Veggie Delite) should also be arriving in homes across the country within the next two weeks.

When asked how the new law will reform health insurance, House speaker Nancy Pelosi stressed the importance of preventive measures. "Ultimately you won't need to go to the hospital so often when you maintain a healthy diet. And I might add the slower you eat, the less weight you gain. We're not in a big rush. Pause, reflect."

President Obama reminded Americans how much they already spend on health care and how exercise will improve not only their bodies but also their minds. "It has been proven that physical fitness can improve one's mood. It can, dare I say, rid one of the feeling of remoteness and detachment." The president said he was looking forward to touting this historic act during his State of the Union address, which is now scheduled for April

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SABRINA MATUS / AMALGAMATED IMAGES

Presidential staff and Secret Service agents test equipment in a 'Gold's Gym Express' location in what had been a White House counterterrorism center.

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